

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"She was not the least bit irresponsible."

—Terry Rutledge, father-in-law of Veronica Rutledge, who was when her 2-year-old son discharged her handgun at an Idaho Wal-Mart

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MILITARY

AF lawyer scolded after Facebook post

Captain investigated after comments on sex assault program

By CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

With just a few weeks left in her Air Force career, Capt. Maribel Jarzabek decided to vent a little. She posted a few messages on a U.S. senator's Facebook page, supporting the lawmaker's push to overhaul the military justice system for sexual-assault cases.

Not long afterward, Jarzabek received an email from a higher-ranking officer, informing her that she was under criminal investigation. The allegations? That she had wrongfully advocated "a partisan political cause" and expressed opinions online that could undermine public confidence in the Air Force.

Jarzabek is a military lawyer assigned as part of a new program to represent victims of sexual assault. Although the Defense Department has promoted the program as a success story and part of a broader campaign to crack down on sex crimes within the armed forces, Jarzabek had grown disillusioned and said she felt the Air Force was papering over deeper problems.

"Changes are needed, and it's time that the public knew about the military's true dirty little secrets!" she wrote Dec. 2 in a long comment posted on the Facebook page of Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.

Under military regulations, uniformed personnel are prohibited from publicly participating in overt political causes. Appearing at a rally in uniform or endorsing a candidate is forbidden.

In her Facebook posts, Jarzabek identified herself as an active-duty Air Force lawyer, which apparently is what drew the attention of her superiors and prompted the investigation.

On Dec. 23, after a brief investigation, Jarzabek said she was notified by the investigating officer that she had been found guilty of the allegations. The punishment was decidedly mild: She was given "verbal counseling," or a warning not to do it again.

Although the outcome won't appear as a black mark on her of-



Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force Capt. Maribel Jarzabek briefs victim advocates in August at Inçirlik Air Base, Turkey. In December, she commented about sexual assault cases and the military justice system on a senator's Facebook page. Shortly afterward, she found out she was under investigation.

ficial military record, Jarzabek called the investigation a thinly veiled attempt to retaliate against her for advocating too strongly for sexual-assault victims. In an interview, she also questioned the timing, noting that her department from the service was imminent. After a five-year career, Wednesday was her last day.

"I told the truth," said Jarzabek, 34, who is stationed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. "I do believe they are trying to silence me and also send a message to other special-victim counselors who agree with me but are afraid to speak up."

Air Force Col. Kristine Kijek, the investigating officer who upheld the allegations against Jarzabek, did not respond to an email seeking comment. Lt. Col. Christopher Karns, an Air Force spokesman at the Pentagon, said he could not discuss details of Jarzabek's case because of privacy restrictions.

In a statement, Karns said the Air Force "is strongly committed to combating sexual assault" and has "actively listened to feedback and suggestions concerning military justice improvements."

He said any Air Force members who—like Jarzabek—believe that they have been retaliated against

have the right to file a complaint with the Defense Department's inspector general. Jarzabek said she decided not to go that route.

The military's record of investigating and prosecuting sexual-assault cases has been a sensitive subject at the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill. Members of Congress and President Barack Obama have demanded reforms amid a surge in reported incidents of rape and sexual abuse.

Military commanders have adopted a host of administrative and legal changes and have made clear to their troops that the issue is a top priority. But some lawmakers have been pressing for more radical changes.

Foremost has been a bill introduced by Gillibrand that would strip commanders of the authority to oversee investigations into sexual assaults and other serious crimes, giving those powers to uniformed prosecutors.

A majority of senators voted in favor of Gillibrand's measure in March, but the bill fell five votes short of the 60 necessary to clear a procedural hurdle. Gillibrand had been pushing for another vote in early December.

"I admire her bravery in speaking her mind, because I have heard

from many other active-duty servicemembers who have encouraged me privately to keep moving forward but are afraid to say it publicly out of fear of retribution or retaliation," Gillibrand said in a written statement. "I think the message being sent here is very clear — unless you are going to toe the company line, shut up, or we will punish you."

Jarzabek and her supporters said she had raised her superiors' hackles previously by zealously advocating for sexual-assault victims. She was a key player in a case that led to the retirement of a three-star general a year ago after he was criticized for his oversight of an investigation of a rape suspect.

Don Christensen, a former chief prosecutor in the Air Force, now serves as president of the advocacy group Protect Our Defenders, which backs Gillibrand's bill. He said the criminal investigation into Jarzabek would resonate within Air Force legal circles.

"It's clear that if you support the current system and you do so publicly, then that's something that's considered praiseworthy and can get you promoted," he said. "But if you oppose it and say so, you'll get criminally prosecuted."

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EBOLA OUTBREAK

Ex-Army researcher among 'Person of the Year' honorees

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two decades before the latest Ebola outbreak killed thousands of people and left the international community scrambling, former Army scientist Thomas Geisbert was already at war with the virus.

His battlefield was the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md., home to an elite biosafety Level 4 lab where the U.S. military studies deadly contagions. Geisbert is one of the Ebola fighters named by Time Magazine as the 2014 Person of the Year.

He had his first major brush with the virus at the institute in 1989, when as a young Army scientist he discovered a new strain in sick monkeys that had been shipped from the Philippines to Reston, Va. The discovery was chronicled in Richard Preston's nonfiction bestseller "The Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story." "It was the first time I saw the Reston species of Ebola in the electron microscope ... Richard became a millionaire and I got an autographed copy of the book," Geisbert, now 52, joked in a phone interview.

So, he benefitted from the experience.

"The recognition I got from that really catapulted my career. As a young scientist you're trying to find your niche," said Geisbert, who is now a professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

The Defense Department's concerns about Ebola and other viruses jumped in the 1990s after the scope of Russia's bioweapons program was revealed.

"There was knowledge that the former Soviet Union was looking at weaponizing Ebola" during the Cold War. "And so that was kind of the mission at USAMRIID ... to develop medical countermeasures," Geisbert recalled.

Some of the institute's efforts appeared promising at the time, but scientists were in for disappointment when trying out potential vaccines.

"You'd go to study in a mouse or a guinea pig and they'd live and you'd get all excited," Geisbert said. "Then there'd be a study in [monkeys] and they would all die. It's just very frustrating."

The big breakthroughs in Ebola research didn't come until funding ramped up after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Since 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has invested about \$300 million to develop medical countermeasures for hemorrhagic fever viruses such as Ebola.

Some Army scientists were sent to the Centers for Disease Control to create countermeasures to the viruses. The ones who remained

at the institute were directed to focus on Ebola.

"Ebola was kind of my favorite bug and what I had worked on. So being told, 'You have to work on Ebola,' wasn't such a bad thing," Geisbert said.

Previous research efforts had failed to protect monkeys from the disease. But Geisbert and Dr. Heinz Feldmann, a researcher at the Public Health Agency of Canada at the time, came up with an idea for a new type of vaccine that would later be known as VSV-EBOV.

"We did the pivotal rhesus monkey studies at USAMRIID in 2003 and then published the paper showing that those vaccines completely protected monkeys against Ebola," he said. "It was a huge deal at the time."

The success of the monkey trials suggested that the vaccine would work on people, since both primates are biologically similar.

The Canadian government's involvement in the research and Feldmann's key role in the effort resulted in VSV-EBOV being dubbed "the Canadian rhesus monkey vaccine."

"I get irked," Geisbert said, because it doesn't give the U.S. Army any credit. A lot of the research was done by his team at the institute, and significant funding came from the Defense Department.

So, he faces the challenge that Geisbert faced at the institute was developing a drug to treat people infected with Ebola.

"That's a harder nut to crack" than creating vaccines, which are preventative in nature, he said.

But in 2009, he and other researchers created one that was 100 percent effective in monkeys.

"There's no greater feeling," he said.

The treatment was later named TKM-Ebola and is now being developed by the Canadian firm Tekmira Pharmaceuticals Corp.

Geisbert's work came with significant risks. The majority of those infected with Ebola succumb to the disease. In a BSL-4 lab, an accidental prick with a needle or an animal bite could lead to a fatal infection.

Geisbert said he's never had a major scare due to a mishap, but "it's always in the back of your mind."

Former colleagues remember the scientist as a hardworking people person.

"He would be the first one in [the laboratory] suite and the last one out," recalled Denise Braun, a lab technician at USAMRIID who worked with Geisbert for about 15 years. "He wanted to make certain that his team was safe. When you have a leader giving 100 percent, that prompts the people working for you to do the same."

Braun said the importance of the mission drove Geisbert and the rest of his team.

"At USAMRIID, we take the mission very seriously. It's first and



Thomas Geisbert, standing outside his research laboratory at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, was among the Ebola fighters named by Time Magazine as the 2014 Person of the Year.

'Ebola was kind of my favorite bug and what I had worked on. So being told, 'You have to work on Ebola,' wasn't such a bad thing.'

Thomas Geisbert

one of the Ebola fighters named as Time Magazine's 2014 Person of the Year

foremost about protecting service members, but our research also benefits public health — as we've seen with the current Ebola virus outbreak," she said in an email.

Despite their success in animal trials, VSV-EBOV and TKM-Ebola never made it through the FDA approval process or went into mass production.

"It wasn't our mission," Geisbert said. "We were ... the lab guys, so our job was to come up with the ideas and prove that they worked in animal models." After that, he said, it was up to others to conduct human trials and get the drugs to market.

Geisbert said the major drug companies weren't interested.

"There wasn't a very large market for Ebola countermeasures," he said. "So you weren't going to have big pharmaceutical companies [say], 'Hey, I'm going to make an Ebola vaccine.' Because who's going to buy it?"

The latest outbreak in West Africa, which has killed nearly 8,000 people and infected Westerners, changed that.

"There's a lot of people that have stepped up to the plate to do the right thing," he said.

U.S. government health agencies are fast-tracking some of the more promising Ebola treatments, and the FDA is allowing Ebola-infected people to use drugs that have been developed but haven't been tested on humans.

TKM-Ebola was given several Ebola patients this fall, including American doctor Richard Sacra, an aid worker who contracted the virus while working at a hospital

in Liberia. Every person who was treated with TKM-Ebola survived, according to Geisbert.

"It's very difficult to say that one thing worked, because so many of these patients got multiple treatments," he said. "But based on the studies that I've seen in nonhuman primates, I'm highly confident that it will end up being one of the better treatments."

Supplies of Ebola vaccines and drugs are limited, but the private sector is engaged in the effort to get them to market in large quantities. Merck and GlaxoSmithKline recently signed on to manufacture them, and human testing is underway.

Geisbert anticipates fairly rapid progress. "I think you're going to see some of these vaccines make a difference in the next couple of years," he said.

Despite his breakthrough work, Geisbert didn't expect so much public recognition. He said he was "stunned" when he found out that he was part of the group of scientists, doctors, nurses, caregivers and health organization directors that was honored in Time.

"I thought that I was one of several different scientists that was going to be included in some article about medical countermeasures" for Ebola, he recalled. He was notified by someone at the magazine about five minutes before the article was posted online.

The Person of the Year title goes to a man, woman, group or concept that Time's editors believed had the most influence on the world during the previous 12 months. For 2014, the Ebola fighters beat out the pro-

testers in Ferguson, Mo., Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani and Chinese business tycoon Jack Ma in the final stage of the selection process.

"Ebola is a war, and ... the rest of the world can sleep at night because a group of men and women are willing to stand and fight," Time editors wrote, explaining their decision. "For tireless acts of courage and mercy, for buying the world time to boost its defenses, for risking, for persisting, for sacrificing and saving," the Ebola fighters were named Person of the Year.

Geisbert appreciates the honor. But the apparent success of TKM-Ebola in treating humans is what really satisfies him.

"If it saves one person's life, it's all worth it," he said. "But if it saves a whole lot of people, that would be fantastic."

Geisbert left USAMRIID in 2009, but his Ebola work continues at UTMB, which was designated an Ebola treatment center after Thomas Eric Duncan died of the disease in October at a hospital in Dallas. The facility where Geisbert works also houses an elite BSL-4 lab.

"We're extremely proud of Dr. Geisbert and his ... cutting edge research," UTMB president Dr. David Callender said in a press release.

Geisbert is using a grant from the National Institutes of Health to do more Ebola research and develop three kinds of treatments. His team is hoping to develop a cocktail of drugs that can more effectively combat the virus.

Geisbert has made his mark, but the hope of saving lives with better vaccines and treatments keeps him motivated to do more.

"That's what makes me get up and go to work in the morning," he said.

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MILITARY

Book about 'brats' met with backlash

Mother, daughter who tried to rename military children get harsh response

By JOHN KELLY
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Would you rather be called a brat or a champ? The answer might seem obvious. Why choose to be an unruly, impudent child when you could be a valiant victor? That's what Debbie and Jennifer Fink thought, anyway.

The Bethesda, Md., mother and daughter are the authors of "The Little C.H.A.M.P.s," a 58-page, self-published book aimed at the elementary school-age sons and daughters of U.S. military personnel and their civilian schoolmates.

It tells the story of five military dependents, or "brats," as the offspring of servicemembers are commonly known. They include Conzo, an Army brat whose father is about to deploy for the third time; Lo, a Marine brat whose father has received a medical discharge; and Smiley, a Navy brat whose family has moved seven times in his life.

The book doesn't call these characters brats. "We are called the Little Champs, because CHAMP stands for Child Heroes Attached to Military Personnel," narrator Smiley explains in the book. "We sure like the way that sounds."

Well, you're about the only one, Smiley. Around Thanksgiving, a clarion call went out across social media: Debbie and Jennifer Fink were trying to abolish the word "brats."

The brats mobilized for war. Bob Holliker is an Air Force brat, or as he likes to spell it, Brat, as if it was a nationality or religion. His father was a commissary officer and Bob grew up on bases in Japan, Puerto Rico, France and Germany. Bob joined the Air Force and became a pilot, which means his two kids are brats, too.

In early November Bob saw something on Facebook about "The Little C.H.A.M.P.s" and about Operation C.H.A.M.P.s, a nonprofit the Finks created to offer free baby-sitting to military parents in the Washington area. On one of the charity's websites was the exhortation "Brats are now champs."

"I looked at it and said, you've got to be kidding," said Bob, who retired outside Toledo, Ohio. "My initial reaction was anger. When I thought, if these people are successful, I will lose my heritage. I'm not trying to be a smart aleck here. I can't tell you if they rebranded it 'champs' because of marketing considerations or because of social engineering, because the pretty people don't like the word 'brats.'"

Kay Kern, whose father served 28 years in the Army, was in Columbia, S.C., at a reunion of a group called Southern Brats when she learned of the Finks' book. "That

was the big topic of conversation: Who are these people trying to infringe upon what we consider our heritage?"

Thousands of adult brats joined a Facebook group that Bob created called "BRATS: Stolen Valor - Stolen Identity," a name that references the fraudsters who claim military honors they didn't earn. Brats from around the country started chiming in, proclaiming their brat pride and wondering just who these Fink women thought they were.

Jennifer Fink is 23. When she was a student in high school she started volunteering with the Red Cross at what was then Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

"I was a civilian living in Bethesda and for the first 17 years of my life I had no idea there was a military installation, let alone the president's hospital, in my home town," she said.

Jennifer increased her volunteer hours, eventually spending as many as five hours a day working with wounded warriors and their families.

In 2011 Jennifer approached her mom, Debbie, a self-described "edu-tainer" whose self-published kids books include one on how to cope when a parent has cancer.

"I said, 'Whatever your next project is, put me on the back burner. Your next project has to be with military-connected families,'" Jennifer said.

The book they wrote together was originally titled "The Little Brats." They sent drafts to officers and enlisted personnel, to children, to nonprofits that work with military families. They wanted feedback, Jennifer said, but they also wanted to forge connections with groups that might get the book a wide audience.

"The title received a bit of 'push-back,'" Jennifer said.

"While we know brats is a name that's used with pride, there are a large number of military-connected children and their families and organizations who really do not like the term 'brats,'" she said.

One of those groups was the Military Child Education Coalition outside Austin.

"We just told them we don't use the term," said MCEC's president and chief executive, Mary Keller.

Clearly here, the Finks have stepped into some kind of gap that really brought out a lot of emotion in people.

Jacey Eckhart

Military.com column on use of the term "brats" to describe military dependents



MATT McCLAIN/The Washington Post

Jennifer Fink and her mother Debbie say that they had no idea how controversial their book "The Little C.H.A.M.P.s: Child Heroes Attached to Military Personnel" would be.

"We train a tremendous amount of people who have no experience in the military ... It's kind of like you can refer to yourself one way or the family can refer to themselves one way, but you wouldn't want an outsider who didn't understand your experience to use that term."

Jennifer said she and her mom kicked around other names: military-connected children, military kids, little patriots. They ended up coining their own term: champs.

"Everyone loved it," Jennifer said of the book. "They absolutely loved it."

Well, not everyone.

No one knows for sure how military kids got tagged with "brats." Some sources claim it comes from England and stands for British Regiment Attached Traveler, though that seems highly unlikely. Others like to say it means bold, resourceful, adaptable, tolerant. (Or brave, resilient, American, tenacious; opinions vary.)

"Certainly it has a negative connotation, so when we're growing up we don't call ourselves brats," said Morton Ender, a professor of sociology at West Point whose mother served in the Army. "When you get older you learn the term is meant affectionately."

"Brat," he said, has "a sort of swagger."

"Champ" doesn't swagger. To some, it reeks of everybody-gets-a-trophy political correctness.

But what really seemed to irritate hard-core brats was the fact that neither of the Finks had been raised around the military. How could anyone but a brat hope to speak for the bratterat?

In November, the Amazon page for the Finks' book started flooding with hundreds of one-star reviews, posted, Jennifer said, by people who couldn't possibly have read the book. (She said they only sold a half dozen copies in the last month or so.)

Some attacks veered into the personal. On Bob Holliker's "Stolen Valor" Facebook page, someone posted Debbie Fink's home

address. Another brat pointed out that the Finks are Jewish.

Brats groused about the USO-funded trips Debbie Fink took to U.S. military bases in Germany, Italy, Japan and South Korea, where she visited Department of Defense schools, read from "The Little C.H.A.M.P.s" and educated children.

Brats scoured the Operation C.H.A.M.P.s websites and parsed statements from Jennifer and her mother looking for ammunition. There were dark mutterings that the whole thing was somehow a scam.

"People assume we're lining our pockets with profit," said Jennifer. "We're a 501(c)(3), 100 percent volunteer-run. Not one person has earned a penny."

She said proceeds from the sale of the book were what covered training, background checks and insurance for the baby-sitting program, called "Champsitting."

On Nov. 25, the Military Child Education Coalition posted an announcement on its Facebook page. "After careful consideration," it began, "we are withdrawing our support from The Little Champs program."

MCEC assured everyone that all of its copies of "The Little C.H.A.M.P.s" would be thrown out. The brat bombardment, MCEC's Keller said in an interview, "was distracting us from doing our work."

On Dec. 10, the Finks announced they were pulling the plug on Operation C.H.A.M.P.s.

"We have reached this decision reluctantly, following weeks of escalated divisive attacks from a group of adult children of military Servicemembers, which began as a difference of opinion regarding terminology," read a statement on its website.

Jennifer said they and their sponsors were drowning under what she feels was cyberbullying.

"It wasn't worth it," Jennifer said. "It was so not why we started this."

There was a backlash against the backlash. Jacey Eckhart, director of spouse and family programs at Military.com, wrote a column deploring the brouhaha. Its first sentence: "This is why we can't have nice things, people."

Eckhart — an Air Force brat married to a career Navy man — was surprised by the vitriol the Finks encountered. "I have been in this space since 1996 and I have not seen that kind of thing happen," she said in an interview. "Clearly here, the Finks have stepped into some kind of gap that really brought out a lot of emotion in people," she said.

What has Jennifer learned? "That there's no room for civilians to play a role," she said. "They've made that very clear."

As for her immediate future, Jennifer said she's focused on planning her wedding. She's engaged to a man who is serving in the U.S. military, though she said security concerns prevent her from saying in which branch and where.

That means if her husband stays in the service, and if they have children, then those kids could be ... well, what would you call them, Jennifer?

"I would use any and all the names that celebrate them: military-connected kid, military kid, brat, champ, fabulous child whose father is a hero and who served our country."

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WAR/MILITARY

US efforts for women in Afghanistan criticized

By PAUL RICHTER

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Helping Afghanistan's women survive and prosper has been a popular cause in Washington for more than a decade, with active support from former first lady Laura Bush, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and top U.S. lawmakers.

Supporters have contended that helping Afghan women, who were badly mistreated by the country's former Taliban rulers, should be one of the most important goals of U.S. involvement there.

But with the official end of U.S. combat operations this week after 13 years of war, a federal auditor has concluded it is unclear how much Afghan women have benefited from the U.S. efforts or even how much has been spent on them.

A report by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction found that the Pentagon, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development failed to properly track what was spent for women's advancement in hundreds of programs.

Though U.S. officials have reported major progress in providing better education, health

care and business opportunities for women, "there is no comprehensive assessment available to confirm that these gains were the direct result of U.S. efforts," the auditor's report said. "None of the three agencies can readily identify the full extent of their projects, programs and initiatives supporting Afghan women, or the corresponding amount of funding expended on those efforts."

It also found that responsibility for the programs was "fragmented," with dozens of offices involved to some degree, but no one unit knowledgeable about the entire effort.

The issue is still relevant because the Obama administration is planning to continue — and in some areas increase — spending on Afghan women over the next four years as part of a \$20 billion reconstruction effort.

U.S. officials have for years boasted that girls' primary school enrollment has risen from virtually zero in 2001 to 80 percent of girls now, while maternal mortality has fallen from 1,600 deaths per 100,000 births in 2001 to 327 per 100,000 in 2013. Political participation has grown, with an unprecedented 300 female candidates running for provincial council seats this year.

But while the State Department



RAHMAT GUL/AP

An Afghan police officer takes part in a graduation ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Dec. 21.

and USAID said, for example, that 3 million girls now attend school, "they did not identify what specific U.S. program made that possible, how much was spent on the endeavor, or what the eventual outcome of the enrollment was," the auditor said.

U.S. agencies say they have spent about \$2 billion overall on Afghan women to date, including about \$1 billion between fiscal 2011 and 2013, the period analyzed by the study. The inspector general could verify that only \$64 million was spent for women in 652 programs.

The auditor found similar shortcomings in a 2010 report and urged the agencies at that time to more closely track the spending.

US airstrike kills senior al-Shabab leader in Somalia

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A senior al-Shabab militia leader was killed by a U.S. airstrike in southwestern Somalia, according to U.S. and Somali officials.

Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency identified the slain man Tuesday as Abdishakur, also known as Tahillil. In a statement, the agency said he was the head of an al-Shabab unit believed responsible for suicide attacks in Mogadishu, the country's capital.

The Pentagon said Monday it had launched an airstrike against a "senior Shabab leader" near the town of Saakow, northeast of the al-Shabab stronghold of Kismayo. Officials at that time did not identify the target or say whether the strike had succeeded.

A U.S. defense official, who was not authorized to speak on the record, confirmed Tuesday that Abdishakur was the target of the

attack and was killed.

Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. John Kirby told MSNBC that the military was still assessing results but had "no indications whatsoever so far of any civilian casualties or collateral damage as a result of the strike that we took."

The airstrike underscored the Obama administration's attempts to help contain the Islamist insurgency that has threatened the U.S.-allied government in Mogadishu and has spilled over into neighboring Kenya.

Al-Shabab, which controls a large swath of rural Somalia, has been trying to regain power since it was driven out of Mogadishu and the port city of Kismayo by African Union troops in 2011 and 2012.

In recent months, al-Shabab has claimed responsibility for lethal attacks on coastal resort areas in Kenya as well as a Dec. 3 suicide bombing of a United Nations convoy near Mogadishu's airport.

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MILITARY

Panel report on personnel costs due Feb. 1

By CHRIS CARROLL

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A congressional appointed commission will soon deliver key proposals for reining in military personnel costs while keeping pay and benefits generous enough to maintain the quality of the volunteer force, officials say.

The report from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission is due to be delivered to the White House and Congress — complete with draft legislation that could be used to enact the proposals — by Feb. 1. That's just weeks before the President Barack Obama

is expected to deliver his federal budget proposal to Congress.

The report will contain recommendations on hot-button topics including how to structure the military retirement system — current troops and retirees will be grandfathered in the present system, officials stress — and the fate of popular benefits such as military commissaries.

The commission was mandated by Congress in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act after years of hand-wringing over the Defense Department's personnel costs, which have steadily consumed 25 percent of the base budget. Officials inside the Pentagon and without have pushed to

control costs in an era of falling defense spending, but a compensation and retirement committee spokesman said proposals for change are being weighed with great care.

The commission conducted an extensive round of town halls, public hearing and interviews with experts, as well as a troop survey, to ensure cuts don't make the military a hard sell even for those most eager to serve, said Jamie Graybeal, a commission spokesman.

"The commissioners have worked very hard to maintain or enhance the value of compensation and benefit programs for servicemembers, their families

and retirees," Graybeal said. "Protecting the all-volunteer force and maintaining the all-volunteer force has been foremost in their minds throughout the entire process."

Although there has been speculation of proposals for measures such as allowing future troops who serve fewer than 20 years to collect some retirement benefits or for the elimination of stateside commissaries, the commission has played it close to the vest and military officials say they don't know what will be in report.

In order to be ready to respond, the Pentagon is setting up working groups that will convene in early February to quickly analyze

the report, according to a report Tuesday.

As outlined in a PowerPoint presentation obtained by the Military Times, the groups of officers will focus special attention on how changes could affect recruiting and retention and "develop the DOD response for Presidential consideration."

On March 13, after several rounds of reviews, Military Times reported, the secretary of defense will deliver the official DOD response to the proposals, with formal recommendations to Congress from Obama expected to follow by April 1.

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Congress acts to curtail star-rank retired pay anomaly

By TOM PHILPOTT

At the urging of then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Congress in 2006 took aggressive steps to raise pay and future retirement of general and admirals, particularly those serving beyond 30 years.

Rumsfeld viewed admirals and generals as underpaid. Besides raising star-rank pay, he wanted the military basic pay table expanded to incentivize longer service. He got what he wanted, and maybe more. In September 2006, a newly retired member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who served 38 years drew initial retired pay of \$4,000 a year. Today a Joint Chiefs member retiring after 38 years draws more than double that amount, roughly \$241,000.

Four officers today receive more than \$256,000 in retired pay and one gets more than \$277,000, according to the Defense Department activity.

The fact is generals and admirals have been enjoying a kind of golden age of star-rank compensation, shaped in wartime and not likely to be seen again, particularly given a change in law that took effect Thursday.

Star-rank officers won't get a 2015 pay raise. More significantly, any additional years they serve won't have the hefty consequences on retired pay seen since 2006. Star-rank annuities jumped so much in 2006 that a three-star and four-star officers now make considerably more in retired pay than did while on active duty. That's true even counting housing allowance of about \$40,000 annually or, more often, the considerably higher value of residing in three-star and four-star base housing.

Congress included in the fiscal 2015 Defense Authorization Act a provision that phases out a "too generous" retired pay anomaly gradually, fully protecting the pay of senior officers already retired and easing the impact on currently serving officers who already wear stars.

The number of three- and four-star officers drawing more pay in retirement than they did on active duty is roughly 130. But the

pay disparity is large — \$70,000 or more for some 0-9s and 0-10s above what they received in basic pay while on active duty. To understand why, we need to look at all of the levers Congress pulled seven years ago:

■ **Retired pay multiplier.** Before 2007, servicemembers received no retirement credit for years served beyond 30. The multiplier for calculating retired pay was still 2.5 percent of basic pay per year served but the years were capped at 30, capping retirement at 75 percent of basic pay. Effective Jan. 1, 2007, the 30-year cap was lifted for retirements on or after that date. Servicemembers who stayed beyond 30 could continue to earn 2.5 percent of basic pay toward retirement, all the way to 40 years where annuities top out at 100 percent of basic pay.

■ **40-year pay table.** On April 1, 2007, a 40-year pay table went into effect, adding new "longevity" steps in basic pay for officers O-6 and above, warrant officers in grades 4 and 5, and enlisted E-8s and E-9s. Longer-serving O-8s saw two new longevity raises at 30 and 34 years. E-9s, W-5s, O-9s and O-10s saw three, at 30, 34 and 38 years. So, for longest careers, the combination of higher retired pay multipliers and added longevity raises led to far more generous retirements.

■ **Executive pay cap lifted.** Before 2007, basic pay for generals and admirals was capped by the Executive Level III pay for federal civilians. Even with retired pay multiplier, this executive level pay cap led to a dampening of star-rank annuities.

Congress raised that cap to Executive Level II on Jan. 1, 2007, which lifted basic pay for senior officers sharply. That change alone adds more than \$14,600 to senior officer pay.

Then Congress granted one more big favor: It changed the law so the executive level pay cap is ignored in calculating retired pay of flag and general officers.

The effect of all of these changes was huge. A member of the Joint Chiefs who retired in April 2007 with 38 years service began draw-

MILITARY UPDATE

ing retired pay 83 percent higher than the JCS member who retired after 38 years in September 2006 or earlier. Four-star retired pay popped by \$95,000.

Longer-serving enlisted members also benefited, at least from the 40-year pay chart and expanded retired pay multiplier. An E-9 retiring in April 2007 after 38 years drew 53 percent more re-

tired pay than a colleague of equal grade and longevity who retired seven months earlier.

Congress never expressed a regret about the generous star-rank retirement it voted until last January. During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the COLA-minus-1 fiasco, when Congress rushed to cut the value of military retirement then quickly reversed itself, Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., referred to news article. Today's highest-ranking officers, she said, quoting from the piece, could earn more military compensation in retirement than that did while on active duty. Wasn't that a

negative incentive to continue to serve, she asked.

The committee found no proof that it was. However, it didn't seem right that retired pay exceeded active-duty compensation by a wide margin. Seniors included language in the 2015 defense bill (HR 3979) that restores the Executive Level II cap on retired pay calculations.

The change is designed to land softly, however. It applies only to years served after 2014.

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MILITARY

Yongsan sets new rules for use of model aircraft

BY ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The discovery of several camera-equipped North Korean drones south of the Demilitarized Zone last spring raised worries about spying. But at the U.S. military's largest installation on the peninsula, the real security threat this holiday season may have been Santa Claus.

A new U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan policy, issued just days before Christmas, banned the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remote Control Aircraft with cameras — aircraft without human pilots, guided by computers or remote control — on its installations and sets guidelines for recreational model aircraft use.

Garrison spokeswoman Michelle Thomas said the new policy was not prompted by any specific incidents or security concerns, but was meant to reinforce existing military regulations on UAV and RCA use by creating a garrison policy.

"The timing of it really had to do with people getting those as presents because it was just before Christmas... just making sure they knew what the regulations were, and that's it," she said.

A Dec. 19 policy letter, signed by garrison commander Col. Maria Eoff, banned the use of UAVs or RCAs equipped with cameras or data collection devices on Yongsan and other Area II installations "for public safety and OPSEC reasons." The ban excluded UAV and RCA flights made for official military purposes.

The policy allows RCA use in Area II with conditions. Operators must be at least 13, have their aircraft registered and inspected, and the aircraft must go no higher than 100 feet high. RCAs can be used only at the Family Fun Park or sports fields at Yongsan's Blackhawk Village, across from Burke Towers, or at the K-16 Air Base sports field adjacent to the running track.

Violators may be subject to Uniform Code of Military Justice punishment, administrative sanc-



BEN GARVER, THE BERKSHIRE (MASS.) EAGLE/AP

Aerial drones with a high-quality video camera are banned at U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan.

tions or civilian criminal prosecution, the policy letter said.

The letter said that while RCAs have been used recreationally by model aircraft enthusiasts, "they are increasingly being used for professional applications such as surveillance and data-gathering. Such aircraft are likely to be operated in a way that may pose a greater risk to the general public and operators may not be aware of the potential dangers. ... Further, the possibility of signal interference or interception might be associated with such aircraft."

Thomas said the ban on UAVs was not prompted by security concerns following the discovery of several crashed North Korean drones in the South earlier this year, including one that was found to have taken pictures of the president's residence in Seoul.

The rudimentary blue drones were similar in size and shape and were equipped with cameras and parachutes. Defense officials said they were not capable of carrying a significant load of weaponry or software to provide a live feed to a ground contact, indicating the North was in the early stages of developing UAV technology.

The drones' ability to penetrate South Korean airspace without detection raised concerns about the country's air defense, prompting Seoul to vow that it would respond forcefully to future drone incursions and increase its efforts to monitor and down UAVs.

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ADAM L. MATHIS/Stars and Stripes

Senior Airman Kenneth Rambo, with the 48th Component Maintenance Squadron, works to remove a rusty bolt Wednesday from an F-15's ejector seat at RAF Lakenheath, England. The squadron revamped its ejector seat inspection process earlier this year, saving 21,000 man-hours of work, according to officials.

Lakenheath airmen save time and money with ejector seat inspection

BY ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — Suffering from personnel cuts and facing a falling grade from quality control, some RAF Lakenheath airmen came up with a way to improve the inspection of F-15 ejector seats, saving the Air Force 21,000 man-hours annually and achieving a near-perfect quality rating.

Airmen with the 48th Component Maintenance Squadron restructured their F-15 ejector seat shop in June to streamline the seat inspection process. In the past, the process was not as tightly regulated and airmen were not required to inspect ejection components in any particular order. Now, every seat goes through three workstations. Only certain repairs are made at each station, and a checklist accompanying each seat clearly documents the progress that has been made.

Air Force officials estimate that the new modular approach has saved \$435,000 per year, a figure that includes thousands of saved man-hours of work. It

requires fewer tools, and it has dramatically improved the quality inspection rate — the number of seats that pass an inspection by an independent reviewer before the seats are re-installed on the aircraft.

Officials said they previously had to keep multiple complete tool kits so airmen could work on every aspect of the chair; now each station has only those tools needed for the assigned tasks, freeing excess tools for other jobs.

F-15 ejection seats must undergo a complete inspection every three years to ensure the ejection systems work properly in an emergency, said Master Sgt. Kenneth Kelly, accessories flight superintendent. While an Air Force technical order regulates what is inspected, it does not state in what sequence parts are to be inspected, officials said.

That led to some confusion in the squadron's ejection seat shop, officials said, with airmen following inspection procedures they had used at other bases. Airmen might not clearly document what part of the inspection they were

doing, forcing other airmen to later redo the work. Managers could spend two hours just trying to find out where an ejection seat was in the inspection process.

The situation came to a head last spring, when the squadron's airmen were ordered to inspect the ejection seats for a group of F-15s deploying to the U.S. Central Command region. Kelly said the squadron had a shortage of personnel because of Air Force reductions, and his unit's quality assurance rate hit an all-time low of 67 percent.

"The Air Force is making cuts Air Force-wide," Kelly said. "We're not getting more people, so when the maintenance ramps up we have to produce with fewer people."

The new approach has greatly improved their quality inspection rate. Kelly said they have inspected 15 ejection seats since starting the new system and only one has failed. The failure, officials said, was the result of a factor not related to the inspection process.

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TOP MILITARY STORIES

YEAR
IN REVIEW
2014

It's time to say goodbye to 2014. And for the military, goodbye to Department of Veterans Affairs head Eric Shinseki and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel. Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl was released after five years

in captivity and awaits his fate, and the 13-year-old war in Afghanistan continues to wind down.

Army Maj. Gen. Harold Greene, the highest ranking U.S. officer to die in an attack since 9/11, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery after he was shot and killed by an Afghan soldier at a Kabul training center.

The VA medical system was diagnosed with a disease that some say turned fatal, with claims of veterans dying while waiting for care on secret wait lists designed to hide failures. Sexual assault also made headlines, for those who perpetrated it and those who worked to prevent it.

Tensions simmered in Ukraine and North Korea. A deadly Ebola outbreak drew troops to West Africa on a humanitarian mission, and violence drew the National Guard to Ferguson, Mo.

The Islamic State militants burst on the scene with attacks in Syria, Iraq and Pakistan, and the United States joined the fight in limited ways.

And then there was Congress, which couldn't agree on troop benefits, force readiness, military cuts or a budget for the year ahead. Finally, on the last day of the 2014 session, they passed a compromise funding bill.

STARS AND STRIPES

Claim that delays cost vets' lives puts VA on the hot seat

By **TRAVIS J. TRITTEN**
Stars and Stripes

One of the worst scandals in VA history began in April with word of possible veteran deaths in Phoenix.

A whistleblowing doctor at the Department of Veteran Affairs, Sam Foote, claimed 40 veterans might have died while waiting for care in the agency's Arizona hospital system.

Delays were not a new problem at VA hospitals. But the situation became a national scandal after another revelation — Foote said VA officials hid the monthlong delays by placing the veterans on secret wait lists.

Within a month, the VA inspector general found the manipulation of patient appointment records was systemic throughout the nationwide health care system — not just the Arizona hospitals — and Secretary Eric Shinseki, a retired general with a distinguished military record, was forced to resign.

In June, it was revealed about

57,000 veterans were waiting more than three months for care, and about 70 percent of 731 VA hospitals and clinics had faked appointment records to mask the delays.

The New York Times in late December reported that senior VA officials in Washington had been made aware of serious problems in Phoenix and did not act.

Stories of VA wrongdoing continued to emerge for months and eventually led the White House and Congress in August to pass a historic overhaul and pump billions of dollars in new spending into the troubled agency. Besides widespread delays and records manipulation, the VA was also criticized for paying bonuses to executives who oversaw misconduct and whitewashing conduct at its treatment facilities.

But after the overhaul passed, a central question remained: Had veterans died while awaiting care in Phoenix?

The answer took a four-month investigation by the VA inspector

general and the results would remain controversial.

The IG in August confirmed many of the problems reported in the system nationwide, as well as the dysfunction in Arizona.

Phoenix staff had kept 3,500 veterans who requested appointments in off-the-books waiting lists.

Among those, 45 patients, 20 of whom died, "experienced unacceptable and troubling lapses in follow-up, coordination, quality and continuity of care."

But auditors said they found no proof that delays caused deaths. Officials with the IG office would later say they expected to find links but were ultimately unable to do it.

"We saw harm ... but I couldn't say delay caused a patient to die," John Daigh, assistant inspector general for VA health care inspections, told a Senate panel in September.

Meanwhile, new VA Secretary Bob McDonald, who was appointed in July, has strongly condemned the conduct at Phoenix and elsewhere, and has unveiled plans to change the VA's culture to focus on care and service to veterans.

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Shinseki



McDonald

Military involvement escalates as US helps Iraq face Islamic State

By **JON HARPER**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — During the first half of 2014, a militant group calling itself the Islamic State overran large swathes of Iraq. Much of the Iraqi army, which the U.S. spent many years and billions of dollars training and equipping, collapsed.

Alarmed at the deteriorating situation, the Obama administration in June began deploying hundreds of security personnel to Iraq to protect U.S. personnel and facilities. The Pentagon also stepped up its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance flights over the country.

From there, American military involvement escalated.

The Pentagon began sending teams of military advisers to set up joint operations centers in Baghdad and Irbil.

At the time, President Barack Obama ruled out using U.S. ground forces to quell the growing insurgency.

But with the Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish peshmerga on the ropes and the Iraqi government clamoring for help, the administration began contemplating airstrikes to degrade the Islamic State and halt its advances.

On Aug. 8, the bombing began, with Navy F-18 Super Hornets launched from the USS George H.W. Bush in the Persian Gulf leading the way.



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Aviation ordnancemen prepare to set down a missile aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush in the Persian Gulf on Aug. 10.

tarian aid to stranded Yazidis and other besieged minority groups.

"When we face a situation like we do ... and when we have the unique capabilities to help avert a massacre, then I believe the United States of America cannot turn a blind eye," Obama said.

The Islamic State retaliated by beheading American journalist James Foley, who had been abducted in Syria.

The Obama administration began weigh-

ing whether to expand the air war to neighboring Syria, where the group controls significant territory.

"Can they be defeated without addressing that part of their organization which resides in Syria? The answer is no," chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Gen. Martin Dempsey said in Aug.

The next month, the U.S. unleashed Tomahawk cruise missile and air attacks in Syria against the Islamic State and the

al-Qaida-affiliated Khorasan Group. The F-22 Raptor — America's most advanced fighter aircraft — was used in combat for the first time.

U.S. airstrikes in Syria and Iraq have maintained a fairly steady pace, with Arab and European partners joining in.

The Obama administration decided to ramp up American military assistance on the ground in Iraq to help Iraqi forces reclaim territory from the Islamic State. The decision was made after Iraq's divisive prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, stepped down and his successor, Haider al-Abadi, promised to form a more inclusive government and heal sectarian rifts.

In November, Obama authorized the deployment of 1,500 more U.S. servicemembers to Iraq to support a new \$1.6 billion mission to train, advise and equip.

U.S. Central Command has been tasked with establishing more joint operations centers and training sites in Iraq. American special operations forces are in the hotly contested Anbar province laying the groundwork for the expanded mission.

The U.S. and its Arab allies are also setting up a training program with moderate Syrian rebels to help them fight the Islamic State, beginning this year.

U.S. officials have said that the fight against the Islamic State — named Operation Inherent Resolve — is expected to continue for years.

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TOP MILITARY STORIES

Sex assault in the military: debated statistics, scandal and a failed bill

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

Hardly a week went by in 2014 when sexual assault in the military didn't make the news.

The year was bracketed by Congressional efforts to take prosecutorial authority in such cases from commanders and give it to trained, independent prosecutors.

In December, the Pentagon provided a progress report on sexual assault prevention that President Barack Obama had ordered last year, which concluded there had been significant progress toward dealing with sexual assault in the ranks.

Here's a recap of key developments:

In February, the Army announced it had removed nearly 600 soldiers serving as sexual assault response coordinators, recruiters and drill instructors for infractions in their records ranging from sexual assault to incidents of drunken driving.

In March, a bill introduced by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., to strip commanders of disposition authority in sexual assault cases — something military officials oppose — failed by five votes to break a filibuster led by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo. In December, Gillibrand and supporters, including Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., were trying again to pass the measure.

They cited the Pentagon's December progress report showing that nearly two-thirds of those who reported a sexual assault said they faced retaliation, adverse career actions and punishment, despite retaliation being illegal.

Defense Department officials focused on a different set of statistics in the report. Even as the total number of sexual assaults incidents, from abusive contact to rape, has declined to 19,000 from an estimated 26,000 in a 2012 anonymous survey, more people were reporting

their assaults to authorities, with nearly 6,000 reports in the past year.

Critics pointed out that incident rates, though lower than in 2012, were the same as in 2010, before many reforms. They noted that more people were filing confidential reports, under which alleged perpetrators couldn't be prosecuted, and that this showed a lack of confidence in the system.

Several high-ranking officers retired last year in the wake of sexual misconduct cases:

■ In January, 3rd Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Craig Frankl announced his retirement after questions about his handling of a rape case against Lt. Col. James Wilkerson at Aviano Air Base, Italy. Franklin, who in 2013 dismissed the fighter pilot's sexual assault conviction — hastening changes to the military justice system — said he was retiring "for the good of this command and the Air Force."

■ In June, the Army announced that disgraced Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair, who had gone to trial on sodomy charges, would retire as a lieutenant colonel, three months after he pleaded guilty to an affair with a subordinate officer and maltreatment of the woman.

■ On the day that Sinclair was sentenced, a military judge acquitted a former Navy Academy football player of sexually assaulting a classmate. Lt. Col. Jay Morse, who'd been the Army's top special victims prosecutor, was reprimanded in June after an investigation into an allegation that he'd groped a captain at a 2011 conference on sex crimes.

■ The Air Force's chief prosecutor, who won the conviction against Wilkerson, also retired. Col. Don Christensen, considered the service's best litigator, said Air Force officials had retaliated against him for failing to back Franklin's decision, just as he said he'd seen commanders retaliate against victims for reporting their assaults. Christensen joined the victim advocacy group Protect Our Defenders as president.



Budget fight pits benefits against troop readiness

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

Troop benefits were in the budgetary cross hairs in 2014.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff made a personal appearance on Capitol Hill in May to urge lawmakers to reduce pay raises, housing allowances and Tricare benefits. They said shrinking defense budgets were forcing a choice between honing warfighting abilities and paying those benefits.

The House resisted, and a few weeks later passed a defense budget for the coming year that rejected the cuts. Retiring Rep. Buck McKeon, R-Calif., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and a key author of the bill, said he would not break promises made to the troops.

The battle over personnel spending was far from over.

The Pentagon is facing mandatory budget caps that will affect day-to-day operations and personnel costs, which have ballooned by more than 80 percent

since 9/11. Its plan included capping servicemember pay raises at 1 percent, requiring troops to pay 5 percent of housing costs and raising out-of-pocket prescription payments by \$30 per year.

The Senate was more swayed by the brass' dire warnings about readiness.

McKeon wrangled over the military spending with Michigan Democrat Carl Levin, Senate Armed Services Committee chair who was also set to retire.

Levin argued that cuts were needed in the coming year. But the Senate — widely criticized as dysfunctional — failed to pass its version of the National Defense Authorization Act through the normal legislative process in 2014.

By late November, McKeon and Levin were holding closed-door debates over a compromise bill.

The NDAA that emerged after Thanksgiving appeared to be proof that Levin had gotten his way. The last-minute deal included the reductions in military pay

raises, housing allowances and Tricare pharmacy coverage.

The House passed the NDAA on Dec. 4 without amendments or much debate. Any changes would have sabotaged its chances of passing quickly before Congress ended its session for the year.

McKeon, in a tearful farewell speech, warned that the mandatory defense spending caps caused by sequestration and the benefit cuts were undermining support for troops.

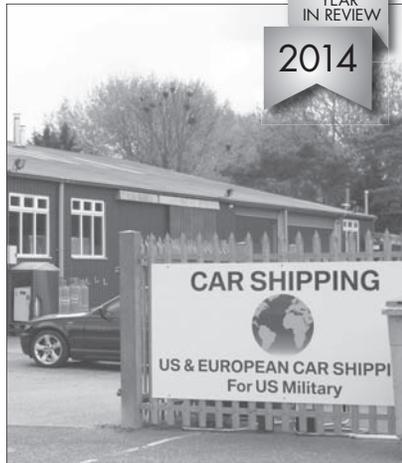
"And how we repair them? With equipment that is falling apart; by laying them off while they're off in war zones; by docking their pay and their medical benefits; by throwing them out of the service into a total broken economy," he said.

Levin said the NDAA will provide "modest defenses" for the Department of Defense and that he was "disappointed" that Congress would not agree on deeper reductions.

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2014



ADAM L. MATHIS/Stars and Stripes

International Auto Logistics opened new vehicle processing centers like this one in Mildenhall, England, when it took over the contract in May to ship servicemembers' vehicles.

Vehicle shipping company fails to deliver troops' cars on time

BY ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

Before the start of this year's busy season for change-of-station moves, U.S. Transportation Command announced a few changes of its own.

A new contractor would take over the shipment of personal vehicles, and with the new company would come a few new pick-up/drop-off locations and a new website for tracking shipments. The command expected the transition to go smoothly.

It did not.

Instead, the new company, International Auto Logistics, failed to deliver thousands of vehicles on time during the summer and struggled to provide accurate vehicle-tracking information.

Ronald Rice, a retiring Air Force colonel, shipped his wife's car from Germany to the United States on May 16 and was supposed to be delivered by the end of June. The car arrived a month late.

Rice said he became convinced during transit that transportation officials did not know where the car was.

"My car could be lost, it could be at the bottom of the ocean," Rice wrote to officials involved in vehicle shipping.

Some servicemembers and civilians became so frustrated with the delays and inaccurate information that they filed a class-action lawsuit in August. The suit, pending in Georgia, seeks more than \$5 million in estimated damages.

How many vehicles were delivered late during the summer is unknown. Transportation

Command officials said federal regulations prevent them from releasing the figures, and International declined a request to provide the numbers in October. But an email from a high-ranking official under Transportation Command, released on Facebook, said that as of Aug. 19 International had processed "27,358 vehicles; 14,154 vehicles are currently in transit with approximately 70 percent late in meeting the required delivery date."

"That performance is far below International's contractual obligation to deliver 98 percent of vehicles on time, but Transportation Command said the company had not met the threshold to revoke the contract.

"The decision to terminate for cause is a subjective decision based on numerous factors involving contract performance," wrote Maj. Matthew Gregory, a spokesman for Transportation Command, in an October email.

Transportation Command officials, however, released figures in September that they said showed improvement. A survey of a random sample of 500 vehicles dropped off in August showed International delivered more than 95 percent on time.

Transportation Command has pointed to legal challenges by the previous contractor as contributing to the shipping problems.

Delays are expected to continue. International issued a warning in November saying shipments into 2015 could be delayed because of congestion at civilian ports.

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TOP MILITARY STORIES

YEAR
IN REVIEW

2014

Troops: We were exposed to chemical agents in Iraq

By PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

A New York Times investigation this year found a "previously untold chapter" of the U.S. campaign in Iraq, with more than 600 servicemembers coming forward to say they believe they were exposed to chemical warfare agents.

These were not the chemicals of any active program to develop "weapons of mass destruction," the Bush administration's justification for going to war, but instead were degraded chemicals dating from the 1980s, when Iraq produced and used chemical weapons without significant U.S. pushback.

The Times originally disclosed 17 cases of U.S. servicemembers injured by sarin or a sulfur mustard agent. Soon after, more servicemembers came forward. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel opened an internal review of Pentagon records, which revealed that hundreds of troops told the military they believe they were exposed, officials said.

From 2004 to 2011, the Times wrote, American and American-trained Iraqi troops repeatedly encountered chemical weapons from Saddam Hussein's rule.

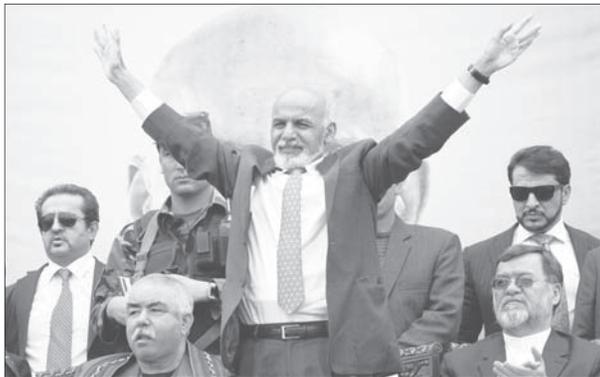
American troops secretly reported finding roughly 5,000 chemical warheads, shells or aviation bombs, according to interviews with dozens of participants. Iraqi and American officials, and heavily redacted intelligence documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

Troops and officers were instructed to be silent or give deceptive accounts of what they had found, the Times wrote. "Nothing of significance is what I was ordered to say," said Jarrod Lammier, a recently retired Army major who was present for the largest chemical weapons discovery of the war — more than 2,400 nerve-agent rockets unearthed in 2006.

Defense officials said late this year that the Pentagon failed to recognize the scope of the reported cases or offer adequate tracking and treatment to those who may have been injured.

The Department of Defense revived a telephone line — 800-497-6261 — for veterans to notify the Pentagon that they may have been exposed.

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JOSH SMITH/Stars and Stripes

Afghan presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani waves to the crowd at a campaign rally in Kabul on April 1. He told supporters that the election represents a chance for the people of Afghanistan to decide politics and lead. After a second round of voting and a protracted dispute over allegations of fraud, Ghani assumed the presidency in September.

Afghanistan elections leave unanswered questions about the future of the country

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — On the surface, the international community can look back at 2014 as a year of goals met in Afghanistan: A new president peacefully elected and long-term security agreements signed.

Afghanistan's longtime president, Hamid Karzai, defied some skeptics by honoring legal term limits and stepping aside.

Millions of Afghans came out to vote during two rounds of elections, despite widespread insurgent attacks. The country's new president, former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, has pledged to tackle major problems like corruption and has charted a closer course with Afghanistan's international backers.

Almost immediately after Ghani took the oath of office, his administration signed a Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States, which paved the way for thousands of American troops to remain after the end of the year when the NATO-led combat mission ends. A separate status of forces agreement was also inked with NATO, clearing member states to also contribute troops to the long-term military training and advisory mission, Resolute Support.

"The BSA reflects our continued commitment to support the new Afghan Unity Government," President Barack Obama said at the time.

Under his plan, 10,000 American troops will stay in Afghanistan. Along with several thousand NATO troops, they will focus on training and advising Afghan forces. With major

"Certainly, having a peaceful transition in Afghanistan is a victory, as is signing the BSA. But embracing these as success is like claiming to have eliminated cancer right before a terminal remission."

Michael Rubin
American Enterprise Institute researcher

violence continuing across the country, U.S. forces will be allowed to conduct combat operations, including providing critical air support for Afghan troops.

However, the continuing violence and the drawn-out political crisis that nearly derailed the election and led to an ad hoc government has only deepened doubts about the future in Afghanistan.

Neither Ghani nor rival Abdullah Abdullah gathered enough votes in the first round of voting in April to win outright. A runoff election in June was marred by allegations of massive fraud. That led to months of political bickering between the candidates while the United Nations oversaw an on-again, off-again audit of the results.

Secretary of State John Kerry flew to Kabul twice to try to mediate between Ghani and Abdullah as their supporters threatened civil war. In the end, Abdullah agreed to accept the results as part of an agreement that named him to a specially created post in the government of chief executive.

Civil war was averted, but the international intervention and the political failures left many unanswered questions.

"Ghani and Abdullah have,

Harold Greene is first general killed overseas since Vietnam

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Harold Greene was shot and killed by an Afghan soldier at a Kabul training center, making him the highest-ranking U.S. officer to die in an attack since 9/11 and the first general officer killed overseas since the Vietnam War.

The shooting occurred Aug. 5 at Marshal Fahim National Defense University. Greene and other coalition leaders were there for briefings on construction projects. The facility was viewed as a critical component of the U.S. and NATO strategy to prepare the Afghan National Security Forces to fend off the Taliban after international forces withdraw.

The final briefing took place in a confined area outside a troop barracks. As it ended, an Afghan soldier named Rafiqullah shot Greene with an M-16 rifle from the bathroom window of the barracks.

Greene, the deputy commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, was shot multiple times and died instantly. He had been there for weeks, including German and Afghan general officers. The shooter was killed during a gunbattle after coalition forces returned fire.

Despite his high rank, officials believe that Greene wasn't specifically targeted. "It opened the shooting was not premeditated and the shooter simply took advantage of a target of opportunity provided by the close gathering," U.S. Central Command stated in a report after investigating the incident.

The Taliban have taken credit for many insider attacks, but investigators did not find any clear links between Rafiqullah and the Taliban or other extremist groups. Coalition leaders have said the vast majority of insider attacks are due to cultural differences and personal hatred rather than information of the ANSF by insiders.

Rafiqullah's motive is still not clear, but an Afghan translator told investigators there were several instances in which he demonstrated disdain for Americans.

Since 2008, there have been 89 so-called "green on blue" incidents, according to the Long War Journal, which tracks these events. The spike in the number of attacks in 2014 has led to a new coalition to add new security measures, including improved vetting of ANSF recruits and additional force protection.



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TOP MILITARY STORIES



YEAR
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January deadline being questioned as turmoil surrounds JPAC agency

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

Turmoil and allegations of malfeasance continue to surround the Defense Department agencies responsible for the search and repatriation of America's war dead in 2014.

The year before had been a particularly low point for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and Defense POW/ Missing Personnel Office, which was forced to acknowledge phony repatriation, concealment and allegations they ignored clues and technology that could have identified the remains of fallen servicemembers.

In January, reports by Stars and Stripes alleged a troubling pattern of wrongdoing and violation of scientific ethics by Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command's Central Identification Laboratory. Those reports detailed botched recovery and identification efforts that spanned modern American military history and included the possible desecration and mishandling of remains, failure to keep critical records, excavation of incorrect sites and the waste of taxpayer funds.

Those reports were soon followed by allegations of mismanagement that led to the burial of an indigenous Southeast Asian with the remains of a U.S. Army pilot from the Vietnam War at Arlington National Cemetery; the positive identification of U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Lawrence Gordon by the French; after JPAC refused to have him repatriated from an unknown tomb in a German cemetery; and an ongoing lawsuit by World War II families demanding the testing of unknown remains in government hands.

The Defense Department announced an overhaul of the agencies in February that would have JPAC and the Defense POW/



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

A Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command worker restores a grid during remains testing on Beto in the Republic of Kiribati.

Missing Personnel Office combined into a more accountable entity, but a DOD inspector general report in October said that poor leadership and a hostile work environment could continue to plague the mission even after the new agency's planned debut in January.

Family groups have said they were hopeful when reorganization planning started but have since soured on the efforts. Top leadership has not been sanctioned for accounting failures. W. Montague Winfield, deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs and DPMO director, was resigned to take a job with the Department of Homeland Security.

Defense officials have refused to outline changes to improve accounting efforts. Negotiations with the family groups have been suspended.

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel's resignation in November also called the reorganization into question.

"The effort has come to a screeching halt," the National Alliance of Families said this month in its newsletter.

The Alliance said the January deadline for the new agency would likely be pushed back.

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MATT MILLHAM/Stars and Stripes

An American and a Latvian soldier sprint in full gear and gas masks at the start of a stress shooting competition on April 30 meant to build camaraderie and test their endurance and marksmanship under simulated battlefield conditions.

US, allies ramp up presence following unrest with Russia in eastern Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

At the start of 2014, the U.S.-led NATO military alliance was a coalition in search of a new mission and identity.

The war in Afghanistan was coming to a close. Europe, which faced no external security threats, was largely peaceful. The future of the U.S. military presence on the continent, regarded by many critics as an outdated Cold War relic, was under the microscope as budget pressures raised the specter of more force cuts.

By March, everything changed. Russia invaded Ukraine, seized a portion of that country's territory and upended assumptions about Europe as a land of calm and order. Now, Europe is off the geopolitical backburner amid uncertainty over Russian President Vladimir Putin's next move.

In the months since Russia's

annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, U.S. military planners have paused drawdown plans in Europe in light of unrest in Europe's east. The U.S. and its allies also have ramped up their military presence in eastern Europe to send a message to Moscow while also reassuring allies unnerved by Russian action in Ukraine.

NATO is now poised to establish staging bases in eastern Europe as part of a new alliance "Readiness Action Plan" that calls for allied troops to maintain a steady presence across the Baltics and Poland. A new "spearhead" rapid reaction force also is being formed to deter threats to NATO's eastern flank.

Such measures signal a return to NATO's core mission: securing its own backyard.

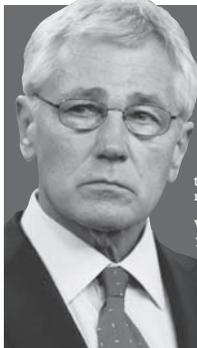
NATO's Readiness Action Plan is "the biggest increase in our collective defense since the end

of the Cold War," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in December.

While the crisis in Ukraine has rejuvenated NATO and the U.S. military mission in Europe, challenges remain. NATO members struggle to meet defense spending benchmarks and the U.S. military faces deep spending cuts that could affect the mission in Europe. If the alliance intends to bulk up its presence in eastern Europe, conduct more military drills in the region and enhance its crisis response capabilities, it will need to invest more resources, alliance officials have stated.

Western sanctions on Russia combined with falling oil prices have hit the Russian economy hard. Whether that will prompt Putin to reverse course in Ukraine and attempt to mend ties with the West remains an open question.

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Hagel resigns as defense secretary; Carter tapped as replacement

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON The Obama administration was just months into a new war in Iraq and Syria when Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced his resignation in November.

Hagel, a former Senator and Vietnam vet, was almost two years into the job and had spent his tenure at the Pentagon publicly backing the administration on its military strategies. But cracks in

his relationship with the White House began to form after the United States and its allies started bombing Islamic State targets in August and Hagel sometimes struggled to articulate goals or differed with top commanders.

Ultimately, his public loyalty was not enough to stave off a parting of ways with the Obama administration.

His departure will open the possibility of a reset at the Pentagon, where Hagel was widely viewed as a mediocre and sometimes overshadowed leader.

The next defense secretary will be coming on at a time when the

administration is fine-tuning its strategy for a new war that could take years and preparing a mission to train and equip Syrian rebels as a proxy army against the Islamic State extremists.

President Barack Obama tapped a trained physicist and former No. 2 in the building, Ashton Carter, to succeed Hagel, who agreed to continue serving until his replacement is confirmed.

Carter has worked under prior administrations, is an old hand in Washington and has recent experience overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Defense Department. Unlike Hagel, he has

no experience in Congress or the uniformed military.

His confirmation is expected to be taken up by the Senate early this year.

The decision will be in the hands of the Armed Services Committee, which will be under the Republican leadership of Sen. John McCain, of Arizona, following the party's sweep in the midterm elections.

In early December, McCain backed Carter as a "highly competent, experienced, hard-working, and committed public servant."

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Bergdahl released but waits to hear his fate

BY MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

The only American prisoner of war from the 13-year fight in Afghanistan was released in May after five years in Taliban captivity, but the celebration was short-lived.

Some of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's former colleagues claimed that he deserted and that soldiers were killed or injured trying to find him, but the claims have not been substantiated.

The deal that brought him home caused further strife, mostly for President Barack Obama.

In exchange for Bergdahl, the White House traded five high-level Taliban detainees at the U.S. prison in Guantanamo, who were to be held under loose house arrest in Qatar. Obama didn't tell Congress in advance, which the Government Accountability Office would later say violated the law.

The Army said next to nothing about how or why Bergdahl disappeared from his post. Three days before Christmas, the Army announced it had forwarded its investigation to a General Courts Martial Convening Authority, Gen. Mark Milley, commanding general of Forces Command. "Gen. Milley will determine appropriate action — which ranges from no further action to convening a court-martial," according to an Army statement.

No official details have been released. But members of Bergdahl's former unit, the 1st Bat-



A frame grab from a video released by the Taliban contains footage of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, left. Captured in 2009, Bergdahl was released by the Taliban in May.

alion, 501st Infantry Regiment of the 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, have not been shy about providing details, despite having been forced to sign nondisclosure agreements in Afghanistan.

In May 2009, Bergdahl, now 28, was a private first class serving in a platoon at Mest Malak, a tiny, remote outpost in Afghanistan's Paktika province. Former colleagues offer differing accounts of Bergdahl's demeanor before he disappeared, some describing him as a "good soldier" who did what he was asked to do, others saying he was aloof and despondent over his platoon's mission in Afghanistan.

While some early descriptions of Bergdahl's disappearance suggested he was captured when he fell behind on patrol — a version he told in the first of a handful of videos his captors released over the years — soldiers who were there and an Army investigation in 2009 offered a different story. They say that on June 30, 2009, Bergdahl abandoned his unit, leaving behind his weapon and body armor as he walked into the dead of night. His disappearance wasn't discovered until the next morning.

Hundreds of soldiers and Special Forces troops fanned out to scour the countryside. Accord-

ing to soldiers involved in the monthlong search, at least six military personnel were killed looking for Bergdahl, though the Pentagon has said it's impossible to attribute the deaths directly to the search effort. The hunt for Bergdahl often piggybacked on regular operations.

On May 31, a month shy of five years after he went missing, Bergdahl was turned over by the Taliban to American commandos in eastern Afghanistan. He'd been promoted twice while in captivity, rising to sergeant. He was weeks away from a third automatic promotion when he was freed.

After nearly two weeks at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, Bergdahl moved to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Since finishing his recovery and reintegration, he has returned to active duty, working a desk job at Fort Sam Houston.

Now, his future is largely in Milley's hands. Bergdahl could face the death penalty if convicted of desertion. If Milley decides not to send the case to court-martial, Bergdahl could receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in back pay and POW benefits.

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Record set straight by upgrading 24 awards to Medals of Honor

BY CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

The Army set the record straight in 2014 for two dozen heroes from past wars — overlooked but not forgotten — who finally took their place among America's most decorated military members.

The White House ceremony in March for soldiers who fought in wars from World War II to Vietnam was the culmination of decades of effort to ensure that sacrifice and bravery, regardless of race or ethnic background, are the criteria for the nation's highest combat decoration.

Only three of the 24 soldiers — Vietnam veterans Santiago Erevia, Melvin Morris and Jose Rodela — lived to participate in the ceremony, where Obama spoke of American willingness to examine the past and try to correct historical wrongs.

"No nation is perfect, but here in America, we confront our imperfections and face a sometimes painful past, including the truth that some of these soldiers fought and died for a country that did not always see them as equal," he said.

The roots of the Army's medal review stretched back to the battlefield in Korea in March 1951, when a young machine gunner, Pfc. Leonard Kravitz, refused to leave his post in the face of what the Army described as a "fanatical" charge by Chinese troops.

Kravitz mowed down waves of attackers as he covered withdrawing comrades. When they later retook the position, they found his body by his machine gun. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest valor award.

A friend from Kravitz's boyhood in Brooklyn, N.Y., heard

the story and thought it sounded a lot like other Medal of Honor accounts. Mitchell Libman was sure he knew why Kravitz hadn't received the highest honor.

"It was obvious to me from reading everything that it had something to do with his religion," he told Stars and Stripes. "And I couldn't believe that here's a guy who saved so many lives, and there are people upset that a Jewish guy is getting the Medal of Honor."

He worked for decades to correct the injustice, finally finding an effective ally in Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla., who introduced a bill requiring the review in the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. The law required the Army to review the cases of all Jewish and Hispanic soldiers who had received the Distinguished Service Cross from World War II onward. An earlier review had found seven black soldiers who had deserved the Medal of Honor but received a lower award.

Reviewers combed through about 6,500 cases and zeroed in on 600 for closer review.

The Army concluded Kravitz had been unfairly downgraded, as had numerous black and Hispanic soldiers.

One of the surviving recipients told Stars and Stripes he'd never been upset about receiving the Distinguished Service Cross. But Melvin Morris, a staff sergeant at the time of the action, said he was proud to represent soldiers who never lived to see the day when only their actions in battle counted, not skin color or religion.

"I don't hold anything against anyone," Morris told Stars and Stripes. "Times change, times move forward, and we look back to correct some things — so I feel good about that."

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Taliban violence continues as US combat mission winds down

BY JAD SLEIMAN
Stars and Stripes

Only 25 remain, down from a wartime high of more than 800.

Isolated combat outposts and sprawling forward operating bases, 62 in all, were transferred from U.S. and NATO militaries to Afghan forces — or disappeared — over the course of the past year, according to the International Security Assistance Force.

What remain are headquarters elements and logistical hubs.

Enduring bases include the headquarters of the NATO-led mission in Kabul, with regional centers at Bagram Air Field,

Kandahar in the south, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north and Herat in the west. Some smaller bases, such as the airfield in Jalalabad, will be used for advising and assisting the Afghan forces.

The tedious work of dismantling, packing and cleaning the bases that were slated for closure was often interrupted by a still potent Taliban insurgency.

In Afghanistan's volatile east, the insurgents made sure departing Americans knew they intended to continue fighting.

FOB Airborne, in Wardak province, was closed after a six-hour firefight in its last weeks, and FOB Ghazni suffered a ground

attack the day U.S. forces were leaving. FOB Shank in Logar province suffered rocket fire and a stubbornly effective threat from improvised explosive devices well into its final month of operation.

"The Taliban want to appear to be driving the U.S. out," Anthony Condesman, a strategy expert with the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies, told Stars and Stripes in October. "They're playing to local tribes ... it strengthens the Taliban image but it gives a broader picture that the government is weak and that they can't hold the territory."

In Helmand province in southwestern Afghanistan, a Taliban

stronghold, the insurgents barely waited a month after the U.S. Marine and British bases in the region — camps Leatherneck and Bastion — were transferred before launching a 48-hour complex attack.

The Taliban have stepped up attacks in Kabul, which still houses the NATO-led coalition's headquarters, foreign embassies and foreign aid organizations. By the end of this month, American forces will number around 9,800 as they and NATO allies transition from their 13-year combat mission toward a train and advise mission called Resolute Support.

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JENNIFER HLAB/Stars and Stripes

Marines prepare a pallet of gear for transport from Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, to Camp Pendleton, Calif., in February.

TOP MILITARY STORIES



Fort Hood becomes target of another shooting

By JENNIFER HLAID
Stars and Stripes

Less than a year after Maj. Nidal Hasan was sentenced to death for killing 13 people and injuring 32 others at a Fort Hood clinic, the unthinkable happened: Another soldier opened fire on the base.

On April 2, Spc. Ivan Lopez argued with supervisors about a leave request, left the building and returned with a semi-automatic handgun. He killed one soldier and injured nine in his unit's administration

building, then left and kept shooting as he drove toward his office.

After killing a soldier in his unit's motor pool office and injuring two in the vehicle bay area, he got back in his car, still shooting, and drove to a medical brigade building.

Lopez killed a soldier and wounded two at that location, then got back in his car. About eight minutes after the rampage began, Lopez encountered a policewoman and killed himself. Three soldiers were dead and 16 wounded.

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ferguson was killed

as he held a door closed to protect others. Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazaney-Rodriguez was killed as he guarded a medical facility. Sgt. Timothy Owens was fatally shot as he tried to calm Lopez down.

"The loss of these three soldiers is a terrible tragedy," Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said at the memorial service on post. "We must come together as an Army, as a community and as a nation, to learn from Wednesday's tragic events, and support and heal one another."

Yet even as President Barack Obama

called for a renewed commitment to keeping troops safe and increased support for those with mental health issues, reports that Lopez had suffered from depression and post-traumatic stress fueled concerns among veterans that those who have served in the military, particularly in combat, will continue to be perceived by civilians as damaged by civilians.

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Missions in West Africa use firepower and logistics

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

From securing an embassy in South Sudan to evacuating U.S. personnel from Libya and sending in troops to help in the battle against Ebola in western Africa, U.S. military crisis responders were kept busy in 2014.

In some cases, crisis response meant sending in troops with firepower, such as the evacuations conducted by soldiers and Marines in South Sudan and Libya, where violent clashes among local fighters put U.S. diplomats at risk.

In contrast, the military's logistical power was in play in Liberia as 3,000 troops deployed as part of Operation United Assistance to curb Ebola's deadly spread.

That mission continues, but is slowing down with infection rates on the decline.

The military expected a mission lasting as long as six months and requiring as many as 4,000 troops, but the effort was later capped at 3,000 servicemembers.

U.S. Africa Command's ability to respond is a signal of its steady maturation since being established in 2007. The command was



JOSHUA L. DEMOTT/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Brian Shea, with the 37th Airlift Squadron, performs a preflight walk around his C-130 at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as his crew prepares to deliver pallets of water and Meals, Ready to Eat to Liberia in support of the U.S. military's effort to fight Ebola in West Africa.

essentially just a headquarters, but over the past two years it has added capabilities that enable it to move forces around Africa on relatively short notice.

During the Ebola mission in October, a Marine quick-reaction contingent in Spain injected a shot of airlift capability that proved key to getting supplies into West Africa ahead of a larger incoming force.

In Djibouti, AFRICOM also maintains the recently formed

East Africa Response Force, an Army unit on call.

In late December 2013, just weeks after landing at Camp Lemonnier, the force was in action as security conditions deteriorated in South Sudan's capital city, Juba. By April, troops from the response force were still on the ground, ensuring the mission's safety.

Meanwhile, the Spain-based crisis-response Marines were mobilized in July to help evacu-

ate embassy personnel in Tripoli as violence in Libya escalated between warring militias.

The Marine force and the Army's Djibouti rapid reaction unit were formed in the aftermath of the 2012 fatal attack on a U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya. Now, military forces are better positioned to confront threats faced by Americans in Africa.

With Libya still in crisis, Ebola still a threat and insecurity across

large stretches of the continent ranging from Nigeria in the west to Somalia in the east, the demand for reaction forces in Africa isn't likely to fade soon.

As Vice Adm. Alexander Krongrad, deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, told Stars and Stripes in April: "It's the sheer unpredictability here," he said. "A lot of things come out of the blue."

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US, S. Korea again delay handover of wartime operational control

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Citing the threat posed by North Korea's apparently growing nuclear capabilities, the U.S. and South Korea agreed in the fall to again delay the handover of wartime operational control to Seoul.

While South Korea maintains control of its forces during peacetime, the delay means a U.S. general will continue to lead both U.S. and South Korean forces should war break out on the peninsula, as has been the case for years.

The transfer of wartime leadership to a

South Korean commander was supposed to take place in December 2015, but the October decision to move to a "conditions-based" OPCON transfer came as no surprise following Pyongyang's third nuclear test last year.

That test — described as a "game changer" by former U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. B.B. Bell, who said it demonstrated the failure of negotiations over the North's nuclear program — was followed by a particularly tense period of heightened threats by the North, prompting Seoul in 2013 to request a delay.

The transfer originally was planned for

2007 but was pushed to 2012. It was then pushed to 2015 amid questions about the South's readiness for the job following the North's attacks on South Korea's Cheonan warship and an artillery attack on the civilian-populated Yeonpyeong border island in 2010. A firm date for wartime OPCON transfer has not been set, though analysts believe it will take place in 2020 or later, giving South Korea time to increase its defensive capabilities.

"This will ensure our combined defense posture remains strong and seamless while the Republic of Korea develops or acquires the critical military capabilities necessary

to assume the lead in the combined defense of South Korea," USFK commander Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti told reporters in Seoul in November.

At the same time the wartime OPCON transfer delay was announced, the two allies said they would keep the Combined Forces Command headquartered in Seoul, despite a plan to relocate most U.S. forces to regional hubs south of the capital. The 210th Field Artillery Brigade will also remain in Dongducheon, not far from the North-South border, "until the Republic of Korea fields a comparable capability," Scaparrotti said.

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NATION

2-year-old accidentally kills mom

The Associated Press

HAYDEN, Idaho — A 29-year-old woman described as a “beautiful, young, loving mother” was fatally shot by her 2-year-old son at a northern Idaho Wal-Mart with what authorities called a tragic accident.

The little boy reached into Veronica J. Rutledge’s purse and her concealed gun fired, Kootenai County Sheriff’s Office spokesman Stu Miller said. The woman was shopping Tuesday with her son and three other children, Miller said.

Rutledge was from Blackfoot in southeastern Idaho, and her family had come to the area to visit relatives.

She was an employee of the Idaho National Laboratory. The Spokesman-Review of Spokane, Wash., reported. The Idaho Falls laboratory supports the U.S. Department of Energy in nuclear and energy research and national defense.

The woman had a concealed weapons permit. Miller said the young boy was left in a shopping cart, reached into his mother’s purse and grabbed a small-caliber handgun, which discharged one time. Deputies who responded to the Hayden, Idaho, Wal-Mart found Rutledge dead, the Sheriff’s Office said.

“It appears to be a pretty tragic



TESS FREEMAN, COEUR D’ALENE (IDAHO) PRESS/AP

People stand inside a Wal-Mart in Hayden, Idaho, on Tuesday after a 2-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his mother when he reached into her purse and her concealed gun fired.

ic accident,” Miller said.

The victim’s father-in-law, Terry Rutledge, told The Associated Press that Veronica Rutledge “was a beautiful, young, loving mother.”

“She was not the least bit irresponsible,” Terry Rutledge said. “She was taken much too soon.”

The woman’s husband was not in the store when the shooting happened about 10:20 a.m. Tuesday. Miller said the man arrived shortly after the shooting. All the children were taken to a relative’s house.

Brooke Buchanan, a spokeswoman for Wal-Mart, said in a statement the shooting was a “very sad and tragic accident.”

Idaho National Laboratory senior chemical engineer Vince Maio worked with Rutledge on a research paper about using glass ceramic to store nuclear waste, The Spokesman-Review said.

Maio said he was immediately impressed with her. “She had a lot of maturity for her age,” he told the newspaper. “Her work was impeccable. She found new ways to do things that we did before and she found ways to do them better.”

“She was a beautiful person,” he added.

There do not appear to be reliable national statistics about the number of accidental fatalities involving children handling guns.

GOP looks to fix Scalise flap

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republican leaders have been supportive of Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise since the revelation that he appeared before a white supremacist organization 12 years ago, suggesting they think the flare-up will fade, while some Democrats have been critical without calling for him to resign.

Scalise, the Republican whip in the House, said Tuesday that he regrets making the speech in 2002 and condemns the views of such groups. He said that as a state legislator he spoke to many groups at that time about a major tax issue.

“One of the many groups that I spoke to regarding this critical legislation was a group whose views I wholeheartedly condemn,” the Louisiana congressman said.

Maio said in a statement. “It was a mistake I regret, and I emphatically oppose the divisive racial and religious views groups like these hold.”

Republican leaders defended Scalise within minutes of his statement. The new Congress, in which the GOP will control both the House and the Senate, convenes next week.

House Speaker John Boehner, of Ohio, said Scalise “made an error in judgment, and he was right to acknowledge it was wrong and inappropriate,” Boehner said Scalise “has my full confidence as our whip.”

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, of California, said Scalise “acknowledged he made a mistake and has condemned the tactics that organization espouses. I’ve known him as a friend for many years and I know that he does not share the beliefs of that organization.”

Scalise won a key endorsement Monday from Rep. Cedric Richmond, who will be Louisiana’s only Democrat and only black in Congress when the new Congress convenes. Richmond told NOLA.com, “I don’t think Steve Scalise has a racist bone in his body.” He said he has worked closely with

Scalise and, “I am not going to let them use Steve as a scapegoat to score political points when I know him and know his family.”

Louisiana’s Republican governor, Bobby Jindal, also defended the congressman.

Scalise acknowledged speaking at a 2002 Louisiana convention of the European-American Unity and Rights Organization, which called itself EURO. Former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke founded the group, which the Southern Poverty Law Center has classified as a hate group.

In an interview Monday with The Times-Picayune of New Orleans and NOLA.com, Scalise said he had little staffing as a state legislator and didn’t always know details of groups he was invited to address. “I didn’t know who all of these groups were, and I detest any kind of hate group,” Scalise told the newspaper.

His statement Tuesday did not deal with the issue of weak staffing or sketchy knowledge of his audiences in 2002. Scalise, who is Catholic, said “these groups hold views that are vehemently opposed to my own personal faith, and I reject that kind of hateful bigotry.”

Louisiana Republicans say Duke, who ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1991, did not attend the 2002 EURO convention, but addressed it at one point by phone.

In his NOLA.com interview, Scalise said he knew about Duke, but indicated he didn’t recognize Duke’s connection to the group. “Everyone knew who he was,” Scalise told NOLA.com. “I would not go to any group that he was a part of.”

Democrats were measured in their criticism. For instance, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi’s office issued a statement not from her but from her spokesman, Drew Hammill. It said Scalise’s “involvement with a group classified by the Anti-Defamation League as anti-Semitic and the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group is deeply troubling for a top Republican leader in the House.”

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee criticized Scalise in an earlier statement on Tuesday, saying he “chose to cheerlead for a group of KKK members and neo-Nazis at a white supremacist rally.”

More than 136 drivers rescued in Calif.

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Fire crews rescued more than 136 people stranded on steep, snowy roads in the San Bernardino mountains during a cold winter storm early Wednesday, officials said.

The heavy snow crippled motorists and prompted an overnight rescue operation Tuesday between the High Desert and mountain communities, where motorists were stuck in about 1 foot of snow along Highway 138, which winds through the San Bernardino Mountains between Crestline and Silverwood Lake, said county fire department spokesman Tracey Martinez.

Firefighters worked to free the trapped drivers and check for injuries, completing the rescue operation about 3 a.m. Wednesday, she said. No serious crashes or medical emergencies were reported, and 50 people were transported to First Baptist Church in Crestline, where Red Cross workers arrived to provide supplies.

Some people were able to drive off as plows used to groom nearby ski slopes cleared the snow, while others abandoned their vehicles to walk to shelter or to their homes, Martinez said.

Drivers across the San Bernardino Mountains encountered difficulty with the arrival of white powder, with California Highway Patrol fielding calls of stranded or scared motorists for much of Tuesday night.

The cold storm from Canada has brought heavy winds and several inches of snow across Southern California.

The National Weather Service

forecast snow across the region to as low as 2,000 feet above sea level. The Antelope Valley and San Gabriel Mountains were expected to see a dusting, while higher elevations in Los Angeles County were expected to see up to 5 inches.

Where snow didn’t arrive, wind had. Strong winds were reported from Ventura down to the southern reaches of Orange County. Fremont Canyon in Orange County saw winds up to 57 mph, while Malibu Hills saw gusts up to 70 mph.

National Weather Service meteorologist Greg Martin said the strong winds would continue through Wednesday morning but drop off in the late afternoon.

Snow, wind and light rain were expected to move out by late Wednesday.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM: A look back in photos on 13 years of war

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NATION

New laws OK wine shipments, ban tiger selfies

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — New state laws taking effect Thursday give livestock a four-month live room, approve direct-to-consumer wine shipments in Massachusetts and levy the ultimate punishment on wannabe teen drivers in Nevada by denying them licenses if they skip too much school. Here's a look at some of the new laws taking effect Jan. 1, in alphabetical order by topic:

ALCOHOL: Wine connoisseurs will be popping the cork over a new law taking effect Thursday that allows out-of-state wineries to ship bottles directly to consumers in Massachusetts. The drive for direct wine shipments had been stalled for years before getting a big boost from former New England Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe. Now a winemaker in Washington state, Bledsoe complained to lawmakers he could not send his products to Massachusetts residents.

ANIMALS: In California, a ballot initiative approved by voters in 2008 takes effect restricting the confinement of egg-laying hens, breeding sows and veal calves.

In Utah, cities and towns can no longer ban specific dog breeds within their limits. At least 10 cities now have restrictions that ban ownership of breeds such as pit bulls.

CRIME: In California, a "yes means yes" standard for sex between college students takes effect, requiring "an affirmative, conscious and voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity," meaning silence or a lack of resistance can no longer be deemed consent.

In Michigan, rape evidence may be better organized and tracked under laws designed to help ensure kits aren't caught in the sort of backlog found when more than 11,000 untested kits were discovered in a Detroit toxicology storage facility in 2009.

DRUG ABUSE: In Michigan, buying cough and cold medicines for the purpose of making methamphetamine will be illegal under another series of measures intended to crack down on meth makers. The laws also prohibit anyone to buy the ingredients and require state police to add meth offenders to a national database.

ELECTIONS: In Louisiana, 16- and 17-year-olds will be able to register to vote when obtaining a driver's license, though they still won't be able to vote until they turn 18.

In North Carolina, individuals filing as a candidate in a primary party must have had an affiliation with that party for at least 90 days before filing a candidacy notice.



A Delaware law establishes new rules for allocating campaign contributions among joint account holders, such as when spouses submit a political contribution using a single check.

ENVIRONMENT: In North Carolina, home sellers will have to disclose whether they know if underground oil and gas rights have been sold.

In New York State, consumers must begin recycling old computers, televisions and video game consoles instead of throwing them in the trash.

In the face of a three-year drought, new California laws require water districts and other local entities to develop plans to manage their groundwater and allow the state to intervene if necessary.

HEALTH: In Louisiana, smoking will be banned within 25 feet of public entrances to state office buildings.

HUNTING: In North Carolina, the state Wildlife Resources Commission faces new restrictions on how high it

can raise fees on hunting, fishing and trapping licenses. Starting with the new year, the fees can't be raised beyond a widely used measure of inflation averaged over the previous five years.

MOTOR VEHICLES: In California, drivers' licenses will be available for people in the country illegally.

In Nevada, students who are declared habitually truant could be delayed from obtaining a driver's license, or could have their license suspended.

In Florida, all children ages 4 and 5 will be required to sit in a child safety seat or booster seat instead of using just a car seat belt.

In Indiana, license plates will be required on motor scooters for the first time following complaints about unsafe driving by those who've lost their licenses because of drunken driving arrests or other offenses.

In Michigan, lawmakers closed a loophole so motorcyclists can no longer



AP photos

Laws taking effect Jan. 1 include, clockwise from top left, allowing direct-to-consumer wine shipping in Massachusetts, minimum wage increases, changes to gun laws in several states, and developing water plans to ease the effects of California's drought.

get by a temporary permit every riding season without taking a safety or skills test needed for a full endorsement.

Massachusetts will finally allow "hold open" clips on pumps at self-service gasoline stations, ending motorists' complaints — particularly in winter — about being in one of the few states where the clips weren't allowed.

In Utah, police will be required to impound the vehicles of uninsured drivers instead of just having the option to do so.

SOCIAL MEDIA: In New York in February, it becomes illegal to pose for a photo with a lion, tiger or other big cat. The measure, which specifically

prohibits contact between members of the public and big cats at animal shows, passed after self-portraits with the animals started becoming more popular online, particularly with some young men on dating sites.

TAXES: In North Carolina, Republican lawmakers who approved an income tax cut also took away breaks to Hollywood and cab drivers. Expiring is a 25 percent tax credit for TV and film productions that in 2013 allowed producers to forego paying \$61 million in state taxes. It's being replaced in 2015 by a grant program for video productions capped at \$10 million.

In Virginia, drivers can expect to see a 5 cents-per-gallon increase in the cost of gas, while Maryland's gas tax is set to rise about 3.5 cents.

In Mississippi, totally disabled veterans and their surviving spouses who have not remarried would not have to pay property taxes on their primary residence.

WAGES: The minimum wage goes up Thursday in several states, including Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Ohio, Maryland, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. A wage increase in New York took effect Wednesday. In addition, troopers in Oklahoma get their first pay raise in seven years.

WEAPONS: In Pennsylvania on Jan. 5, a law takes effect that's designed to give the National Rifle Association, or any gun owner, a better chance at successfully challenging local firearms ordinances in court. In general, Pennsylvania bars its municipalities from enforcing firearms ordinances that are stronger than state law. But the NRA has complained that dozens of local ordinances go unchallenged in Pennsylvania courts by residents who can prove it harmed them.

In California, law enforcement agencies are required to develop policies that encourage officers to search the state's database of gun purchases as part of routine welfare checks. The bill was prompted by sheriff's deputies' failure to detect the danger posed by a man who weeks later embarked on a deadly rampage in May near the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Cybersecurity experts argue that Sony hack was an inside job

Los Angeles Times

Federal authorities insist that the North Korean government is behind the cyberattack on Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Cybersecurity experts? Many are not convinced.

From the time the hack became public Nov. 24, many of these experts have voiced their suspicions that a disgruntled Sony Pictures insider was involved.

Respected voices in the online security and anti-hacking community say the evidence presented publicly by the FBI is not enough to draw firm conclusions.

They argue that the connections between the Sony hack and the North Korean government amount to circumstantial evidence. Further, they say the level of the breach indicates an intimate knowledge of Sony's computer systems that could have come from someone on the inside.

This week, prominent San Mateo, Calif.,

cybersecurity firm Norse Corp. briefed law enforcement officials on evidence it collected that pointed toward an inside job.

"We can't find any indication that North Korea either ordered, masterminded or funded this attack," Kurt Stammberger, a senior vice president at Norse, said in an interview with the Los Angeles Times. Although conceding that his findings were not conclusive, Stammberger added, "No body has been able to find a credible connection to the North Korean government."

Stammberger said a team of nine analysts dug through data including Norse's worldwide network of millions of Web sensors, internal Sony documents and underground hacker chat rooms. Leads suggesting North Korea as the culprit turned out to be red herrings and dead ends, he said.

Instead, the data pointed to a former employee who may have collaborated with outside hackers. The employee, who

left the studio in a May restructuring, had the qualifications and access necessary to carry out the crime, according to Stammberger.

Moreover, names of company servers and passwords were programmed into the malware that infiltrated the studio's network, suggesting hackers had inside knowledge of the studio's systems, Stammberger said.

The FBI, which first accused North Korea on Dec. 19, has stood by its conclusion, saying in a statement there is "no credible information to indicate that any other individual is responsible for this cyber incident."

Sony Pictures declined to comment.

President Barack Obama last month said North Korea was behind the Sony hack and pledged a "proportional" response. North Korea's Internet suffered outages in the days following the announcement.

S. Korean to drop Sony film in North by balloon

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korean activist said Wednesday that he will launch balloons carrying DVDs of Sony's "The Interview" toward North Korea to try to break down a personality cult built around dictator Kim Jong Un.

The comedy depicting an assassination attempt on Kim is at the center of tension between North Korea and the U.S.

Activist Park Sang-hak said he will start dropping 100,000 DVDs and USBs with the movie by balloon in North Korea as early as late January.

From The Associated Press

WORLD



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sailors from the USS Sampson search for debris in the ongoing Indonesian-led search-and-recovery operations for the downed AirAsia Flight 8501.

US warship finds debris that may be from missing airliner

By JAMES KIMBER
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The Navy destroyer USS Sampson is among several search teams to report finding debris that may be from AirAsia Flight 8501, Navy officials said Wednesday.

The ship's MH-60R search-and-rescue helicopters were launched to assist in the search efforts for the passenger plane that went missing Sunday, and the crews, working with multiple Indonesian assets, discovered debris hours after their arrival Tuesday.

Lt. Lauren Cole, a spokesperson for 7th Fleet based out of Yokosuka, Japan, said the debris will be examined by Indonesian officials to determine if it is plane wreckage. The search area is among the most-trafficked shipping lanes in the world.

The Airbus A320-200, with 162 people onboard, vanished halfway through a two-hour flight between Surabaya, Indonesia, and Singapore.

The Associated Press reported that bad weather hindered efforts to recover victims Wednesday and sent wreckage drifting far from the crash site.

Sonar images identified what appeared to be large parts of the plane, but strong currents were moving the debris. Conditions prevented divers from entering the choppy Java Sea, and many helicopters were grounded.

"Sampson is searching a predetermined area assigned by the Indonesian Rescue Coordination Center," Cole said. "We are very much in a supporting role of this well-coordinated multinational search effort, headed by the Indonesian government. We are working closely with the government of Indonesia to identify additional surface or airborne capabilities that best assist their search efforts."

Until Indonesian officials determine the origins of the reported debris, the 330 sailors aboard Sampson will continue to conduct "continuous 24-hour search operations using their two MH-60R search-and-rescue helicopters, advanced radar and sonar, binoculars and optical sight system" while awaiting direction "from the Indonesian authorities to determine the continued recovery plan," Cole said.

The littoral combat ship USS Fort Worth should be ready to join the effort by Thursday if

needed, officials said. Both ships are equipped with search and rescue helicopters.

The Sampson is based in San Diego and was in the midst of an independent deployment to the Western Pacific when it was tasked to aid in the search effort. The Fort Worth, also based in San Diego, arrived in Singapore on Monday as part of a 16-month rotational deployment.

Indonesian search-and-rescue chief Henry Bambang Soelistyo said at least 30 ships, 15 aircraft and seven helicopters were involved in the effort.

Debris from the AirAsia plane and some bodies have been spotted off the Indonesian coast 6 miles from the aircraft's last known location over the Java Sea, according to news reports. Search teams also spotted what they said might be a larger submerged piece of the fuselage.

Navy officials at the Pentagon did not know if the Sampson or Fort Worth will be tasked to help recover bodies, or whether the Fort Worth will be requested to help.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jon Harper contributed to this report. kimber.james@stripes.com Twitter: @james_kimber

Canadian cops: Man kills 8 people before taking his own life

The Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — A man with a lengthy criminal record killed six adults and two young children before taking his own life in Edmonton in what the police chief on Tuesday called the western Canadian city's worst mass murder.

Edmonton Police Chief Rod Knecht told a news conference late Tuesday night that there was no suggestion of gang involvement and said the motive for the "senseless mass murder" appears to have been "planned and deliberate" domestic violence.

Knecht did not release the name of the suspect, but said the man was well-known to police and had a criminal record dating to September 1987.

Cindy Duong, 37, was fatally shot in a home in south Edmonton on Monday, while two men and three women between the ages of 25 and 50, and a girl and a boy — both under the age of 10 — were found dead a few hours later at a home in the northeast.

The suspect was found dead by his own hand in a restaurant in the Edmonton suburb of Fort Saskatchewan on Tuesday morning. A police tactical team had surrounded the area and reportedly smashed through the front of the restaurant with a vehicle before finding the suspect dead.

Duong's body was found around 7 p.m. Monday when police responded to a report of a man entering the south-side home, opening fire and fleeing, Knecht said.

An hour and a half later, officers

responded to reports of a suicidal man at a northeast residence in a quiet cul de sac, the same home where the suspect had been arrested in November 2012 and charged with domestic and sexual assault.

When officers arrived, no one answered the door, Knecht said. They searched the exterior of the home but found nothing overtly suspicious and did not go inside.

"We can't just arbitrarily go into that residence," the chief said.

Hours later police were contacted by a second person and returned to the residence. When they went inside, they found a scene of carnage with seven bodies.

Neighbor Moe Assif said he saw officers come out and talk to a woman sitting with a man in a white car outside the house.

"She just let out a hysterical scream. It was eerie," Assif said. "She was screaming about her kids: 'My kids! The kids!', grabbing her hair and trying to pull her hair out. The cops then ushered her down the road into a police cruiser."

Outside the restaurant where the suspect's body was found, police found a parked black SUV that they say was seen near the location of the first shooting. Knecht said the suspect had a business interest in the restaurant, but would not say if he was the owner.

Investigators have determined the 9 mm handgun used in the killings was a registered weapon that had been stolen in Surrey, British Columbia, in 2006.



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Italy rescues 970 abandoned migrants

The Associated Press

ROME — The Italian Coast Guard rescued 970 migrants Wednesday after smugglers put their cargo ship on automatic pilot heading straight for a crash into the Italian coast and abandoned the command.

The Coast Guard officials said the migrants, most believed to be Syrians and including many children and pregnant women, arrived safely in Gallipoli, in Italy's

southeastern Puglia region, before dawn Wednesday. More than 100 migrants were treated for hypothermia. "It was a race against time," said Coast Guard Cmdr. Filippo Marini.

"The ship was only a few (nautical) miles away from the coast of Puglia" on Tuesday night when six Coast Guard officials were lowered by helicopter onto the bridge of the Moldovan-flagged Blue Sky M1 to try to correct its course. Marini said the smugglers

apparently had left the engine blocked on automatic pilot at a speed of nearly 7 mph into the coast. "There would have been death and destruction" if the vessel had crashed into the coast, he said.

Because a storm was churning up the Adriatic Sea, rescuers couldn't board the ship from nearby Coast Guard vessels. Once on board they unblocked the engine and steered the vessel safely into Gallipoli's harbor, Marini said.

FACES

Sound bound

Anna Kendrick tackles musical flick 'Into the Woods'

BY STEVEN REA
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Anna Kendrick, who stars as Cinderella in "Into the Woods," Rob Marshall's adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical-theater mash-up of seminal Grimm's tales, thinks she knows why we continue to be, well, spellbound by these stories of witches and wolves, giants and princes.

"They're cautionary tales and they're life lessons," says the actress. "The beautiful thing about them — and the dangerous thing about them — is that they are stories that are supposed to guide you in your decision-making through life.

"And, as we know as adults, a handful of stories can't prepare you for every complicated decision you're going to have to make."

For Kendrick, nominated for a Tony Award when she was all of 12 for her role in "High Society," doing Sondheim was no Sunday in the park. Songs like "A Very Nice Prince" and "On the Steps of the Palace" make demands on their performers that standard musical fare does not.

"Sondheim is sort of a sadistic genius," she says with a laugh. "His music asks so much of you. You cannot sit back and relax into some sleeping melody. ... His music is so alive. It just demands that you give all your presence and all your focus to it."

Anna Kendrick — in a party dress from Kate Spade New York's holiday collection — stars in the movie "Into the Woods."

CASEY CURRY, INVISION/AP



CARNIVAL FILMS FOR MASTERPIECE/ITNS

Alastair Bruce is the historical adviser on the TV drama "Downton Abbey."

Adviser explains the manners of 'Downton Abbey' on TV special

BY TISH WELLS
McClatchy Washington Bureau

As you sink into the fifth season of the elegant world of Downton Abbey, spare a thought to what it takes to make it seem so true to the 1920s.

You can chalk the authenticity up to Alastair Bruce, the historical adviser, who makes sure that everyone's backbone is straight, there's no handshaking or clicking of glasses.

"The aristocrats that ruled in England, and their servants lived by a very odd set of rules," explains Bruce in "The Manners of Downton Abbey." The special will air Jan. 11 on AFN-Movie. "Downton Abbey" premieres the same day on the same channel.

"Manners came into everything, how you dressed, how you ate, how you stood and how you spoke. ... They were a secret code that tells you everything about Edwardian England."

Revisiting the period was difficult for a modern cast.

Tom Cullen, who plays Tony Gillingham, a suitor of eldest daughter Lady Mary Grantham (Michelle Dockery), said, "I love Alastair. He's literally taught me everything. How to tie my shoe laces, how to gesture, how to stand."

"The main thing I had to learn was posture: was this idea of sitting up straight," says Lily James who plays Lady Rose MacClare.

"The back of a chair was never for anyone to lean back on," explains Bruce. "It was purely decorative." He adds, "Nannies used to put knives here," running his hand up and down the inside of the back of a chair, "to make children sit up straight," (which may explain why so many dining room chairs had uncomfortably knobby elaborately carved backs).

"Clothes mattered to the Edwardians because every detail meant something," says Bruce. "Ladies' dress was extravagantly elaborate and guided by a myriad rules."

Voice of 'Babe' dies at 51

Christine Cavanaugh, a prolific voice actress whose characters included the titular character of "Babe," has died. She was 51.

Cavanaugh's sister Deionn Masock confirmed Tuesday that Cavanaugh died Dec. 22 at her home in Utah. An obituary notice was also published in Tuesday's Los Angeles Times. Masock says the cause of death isn't known.

Cavanaugh lent her voice to many of the 1990s indelible cartoon characters, including Chuckie Finster in Nickelodeon's "Rugrats," Dexter in "The Cartoon Network's "Dexter's Laboratory" and the live-action piglet of 1995's "Babe."

From The Associated Press

Corden discusses upcoming gig as 'Late Late Show' host

BY VERNE GAY
Newsday

James Corden, the future host of CBS' "The Late Late Show" (he starts March 23), sounds a little fatigued, which makes sense under the circumstances. He is the new father of a 3-week-old baby. He is navigating reporters and critics in Los Angeles wondering about his new film, "Into the Woods," which opened in the U.S. on Christmas Day. And he is also involved with promoting "The Wrong Mans" — the BBC Two comedy-drama series that he co-created and stars in with close friend Matthew Baynton — which recently began streaming on Hulu. The series is about a pair of office co-workers, Sam (Baynton) and Phil (Corden), who become unwittingly involved in a violent international spy-versus-spy conspiracy.

I recently chatted with the Brit on the phone.

The first episode of "The Wrong Mans"



ends up in a prison — that's certainly a major life alteration for the boys.

We did have the idea of setting the whole season in a prison; we realized this season was going to be shown at Christmas and realized that Christmas is all about going home.

I read that taking "The Late Late Show" gig allows you to be closer to your family (Corden's wife and two children will relocate from Britain to Los Angeles).

I'm a husband and father to two children, and someone offered me a chance to be in one place and come home every day after work and be a consistent and present father and husband, which is the single hardest thing you could ever possibly get in this industry ... I can't think of a single greater reason (to do this). No kid has ever sat through a therapy session saying, "My dad was around too much when I was growing up" or "My parents gave me too many cuddles."

You've never really done exactly this before, of course. What are the

challenges?

I don't know if I'm capable, but I'd certainly rather do it than have regrets or playing it safe. Plus, (it beats) this idea of being in films where essentially you are just auditioning and auditioning from one to the next, and you're at the mercy of directors and producers and critics and awards panels. Besides, I'm not just going to sit at a desk and ask questions every day, but am going to try my hardest to make a variety show every day. There will be music and skits and songs and dancing — everything, but I'm not going to just be sitting there with a celebrity and say, "Tell me your funny story about that time in Venice."

Has anyone like David Letterman or Craig Ferguson given you advice?

No, but everyone has been incredibly nice — I like Letterman very, very much, and Jimmy Fallon has reached out to me, and I had a few long chats with Stephen Colbert, and Craig has been particularly amazing. He said you're going to have a blast — you're going to love some days when you feel like you're the luckiest man on the planet, and then there will be other days when you don't know what you're doing.

FAITH

An ever-widening tent

Racial diversity increasing in the Jewish community

By BONNIE MILLER RUBIN
Chicago Tribune

Meira and Tyler Burnett always look forward to their family's annual Hanukkah party, when they will light the menorah and enjoy traditional potato pancakes, called latkes.

The siblings, ages 11 and 14, respectively, also sing in the children's choir at B'nai Yehuda Beth Shalom, where four of the eight participants are black — just like them.

"When I tell friends at school that I'm Jewish, they don't believe me," said Meira, at the Chicago synagogue. "But that's what I am."

The American Jewish population has always been overwhelmingly white, with Central or Eastern European roots — synonymous with matzo ball soup, bagels, Maxwell Street pushcarts and "Seinfeld" — and it's common to hear Jewish people refer to themselves as members of "the tribe."

Today the tribe looks different because of interracial marriages, adoptions and conversions. While the white majority holds true, experts say more racial and ethnic diversity can be found across the spectrum of Judaism.

"There's more variety of narratives than ever before," said Chava Shervington, president of the Jewish Multicultural Network. The Philadelphia-based organization started in 1997 with 20 families and has grown to more than 950 members and almost 3,000 Facebook followers, she said. Its tag line: "Because Jews come in all colors."

The increase in diversity is difficult to quantify. The Chicago Jewish Population Study, conducted every decade by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago first asked about race in 2010. It found that 4 percent (or 5,600 Jewish households) are multiracial, including black, Hispanic, Asian and biracial members.

"People used to look at being Jewish only through a (European) lens, but that's changing," said Marsha Raynes, director of Project Esther, the Chicago Jewish Adoption Network of Jewish Children and Family Services.

'It's a rainbow'

Jerry Kaye is seeing the diversity too. As executive director of Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute, a Jewish camp in Oconomowoc, Wis., participation by nonwhites is at its highest in his 40 years at the helm, he said.

While the camp does not track youth by race, "it's a rainbow," Kaye said. "One of the things going on in the reform movement right now is audacious hospitality. ... Our doors are open, no matter how you get here."

The Burnetts' journey has been anything but typical. Their 65-year-old grandmother, Cathy Burnett, who is white, married a black man she met at college in the 1970s. They had a daughter and later divorced. In 1984, she married Ignacio Tejeda, a Hispanic lapsed Catholic, who converted to Judaism three years ago.

The children are engaged in all aspects of religious life. Tyler's Hebrew is fluent enough to read from the Torah on the High Holidays. He's a member of Barney Ross AZA, a social group for Jewish high school boys. At temple he assists with the children's choir.

Meira will have her bat mitzvah in two years, but given her grandfather's lineage, she's also lobbying for a quinceanera, a tra-



ditional Hispanic celebration of a girl's 15th birthday. Meira and Tyler are enthusiastic Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute campers, where Meira tells curious cabin mates: "I'm the same as you guys ... I just look different."

Seeing more outreach

The Jewish Multicultural Network and other groups say they are seeing more outreach from synagogues nationwide. Leaders are soliciting advice on how to be more welcoming, especially as membership at mainstream congregations has dwindled in recent years.

"This is a huge shift," said Shervington. "Not only do they recognize us, but they are realizing how vital we are to Jewish continuity."

Widening the tent also means embracing dual identities, experts said. Because of the central role that oil played in Hanukkah, it is customary to serve foods fried in oil. But instead of potato pancakes or sugar doughnuts, a family with Jamaican ties might opt for fried plantains. Or those with African ancestry might use kente cloth to cover the challah, or braided egg bread.

"There's no reason why as you are coming from the chuppah — the traditional Jewish marriage canopy — that you can't also jump the broom," said Shervington, referring to a black wedding custom.

Ellen Zemel, 58, knows what it's like to feel like an outsider. Growing up in Fort Atkinson, Wis., the Zemels were one of only two Jewish families, she said. "It's probably why I love mixing it up so much."

In 2004, after several thwarted attempts at adoption, Zemel received a call to come to a hospital in Blue Island, Ill. There, she met the 2-day-old black boy who would become her son, Laib. "I looked down at this tiny baby and it was as if my guardian angel had been talking to my guardian angel. It was *beshert*," she said, using the Yiddish word for "meant to be."

From the beginning, the single mother was deeply committed to making Laib, now 10, see beyond skin color. They worship at a mostly black synagogue, Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation. Next year,

“People used to look at being Jewish only through a (European) lens, but that's changing.”

— Marsha Raynes, director of Project Esther, the Chicago Jewish Adoption Network of Jewish Children and Family Services



CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Top: Ellen Zemel, left, lends a hand for a symbolic lighting of a menorah for Hanukkah during a party for parents and children for Project Esther, the Chicago Jewish Adoption Network of Jewish Children and Family Services, at the Elain Kersten Children's Center in Northbrook, Ill. **Above:** Meira Burnett, 11, lower right, reaches for salad dressing during a Sabbath dinner with her family Dec. 12 in Homewood, Ill.

Zemel is considering sending Laib to a summer camp in California run by Be'chol Lashon ("in every tongue") for diverse Jewish youth.

"I want him to feel comfortable wherever he goes," Zemel said. "Not just to recognize differences, but to celebrate them."

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Consumer confidence edges up in December

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Impressed with an improving economy, American consumers are feeling more confident, a private survey showed.

The Conference Board said Tuesday its consumer confidence index climbed to 92.6 this month from a revised 91 in November.

Consumers registered a more favorable view of current economic conditions; 17.1 percent said jobs were plentiful, up from 16.2 percent in November. Just 19.6 percent said business conditions were bad, down from 21.8 percent last month.

Expectations for the near future fell slightly. Compared with November, fewer consumers in December said they planned to buy a home or a car in the next six months. But 52.2 percent said

they planned to buy a major appliance, the highest share since 2010, noted Laura Rosner, an economist at BNP Paribas. She predicts "continued strength in consumer spending." And their outlook is rosier now than it was when 2014 began.

Consumers have plenty of reasons to feel better. The economy grew from July through September at a 5 percent annual rate, the fastest clip in 11 years. Employers are adding nearly 241,000 jobs a month this year — on pace to make 2014 the best year for hiring since 1999.

The unemployment rate remained at a six-year low 5.8 percent last month.

The missing piece of the economic recovery is pay: Wages are barely keeping up with inflation. Still, tumbling gasoline prices are putting a bit of cash back in



Customers shop at Nordstrom Rack in Schaumburg, Ill., on Dec. 26.

consumers' pockets: According to AAA, the average gallon of gasoline nationwide costs \$2.27, down from \$2.78 a month ago.

Another measure of consumer confidence — the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index — jumped this month to 93.6 from 88 in November. Michigan's December reading was the highest since January 2007, nearly a year before the Great Recession began.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 2)	\$1.2483
Dollar buys (Jan. 2)	€0.8011
British pound (Jan. 2)	\$1.5569
Japanese yen (Jan. 2)	¥117.00
South Korean won (Jan. 2)	₩1,059.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound	\$1.5569
Canada (Dollar)	1.1594
China (Yuan)	6.2066
Denmark (Krone)	6.4615
Egypt (Pound)	7.1504
Euro	\$1.2123/0.8249
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7561
Hungary (Forint)	261.28
Israel (Sheqel)	3.8852
Japan (Yen)	119.52
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2930
Norway (Krone)	1.09124
Philippines (Peso)	44.82
Poland (Zloty)	3.54
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7529
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3235
South Korea (Won)	1,091.24
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9918
Thailand (Baht)	32.86
Turkey (Lira)	2.3317

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., non-U.S. British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to the dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

MARKET WATCH

Dec. 30, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials	-55.16
17,983.07	
Nasdaq composite	-29.47
4,777.44	
Standard & Poor's 500	-10.22
2,080.35	
Russell 2000	-6.05
1,213.05	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federal funds market rate	0.13
3-month bill	0.01
30-year bond	2.77

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Friday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	47	35	PCldy	Fort Wayne	27	22	Clr	Louisville	38	30	PCldy	Pocatello	18	4	PCldy	Shrewport	41	37	Rain
Ablene, Texas	34	29	Snow	Cheyenne	23	5	PCldy	Fresno	50	32	Clr	Lubbock	30	25	Clr	Portland, Maine	30	20	Clr	Sioux Falls	32	8	Clr
Akron, Ohio	25	20	Snow	Cincinnati	28	21	Clr	Goodland	25	8	PCldy	Macon	58	40	Clr	Portland, Ore.	39	25	Clr	Sioux Falls	26	5	PCldy
Albany, N.Y.	39	21	PCldy	Cleveland	34	26	Clr	Grand Junction	28	9	Clr	Madison	26	16	Clr	Providence	33	23	Clr	South Bend	35	29	PCldy
Albuquerque	33	17	Snow	Cheyenne	26	23	Clr	Grand Rapids	28	23	Clr	Medford	40	25	Clr	Pueblo	27	6	Clr	Spokane	20	15	Clr
Allentown, Pa.	33	22	Clr	Colorado Springs	25	12	PCldy	Great Falls	32	15	Clr	Memphis	41	35	Clr	Raleigh-Durham	49	30	Clr	Springfield, Ill.	33	23	Clr
Anchorage	31	18	Clr	Columbia, S.C.	56	35	PCldy	Green Bay	24	8	Clr	Miami Beach	79	70	Clr	Rapid City	35	14	PCldy	Torrington, Mo.	46	38	Clr
Ashville	29	21	Clr	Columbus, Ga.	58	43	Clr	Greensboro, N.C.	47	31	Clr	Miland-Odesa	37	29	Clr	Reno	31	16	Clr	Syracuse	27	22	Snow
Atlanta	46	30	PCldy	Columbus, Ohio	31	24	Clr	Harrisburg	35	24	Clr	Milwaukee	27	19	PCldy	Richmond	47	28	Clr	Tallahassee	64	47	Clr
Atlantic City	41	27	Clr	Concord, N.H.	28	18	PCldy	Hartford Springfield	31	22	Clr	Mpls-St. Paul	23	7	Clr	Roanoke	46	30	PCldy	Tampa	74	63	Clr
Austin	40	37	Rain	Corpus Christi	47	47	Rain	Helena	19	11	Clr	Missoula	12	5	Clr	Rochester	28	25	PCldy	Toledo	24	19	PCldy
Baltimore	39	25	Clr	Dallas-Ft. Worth	40	35	Rain	Honolulu	78	61	Clr	Mobile	33	29	Clr	Rockford	37	18	Clr	Topeka	41	31	PCldy
Baton Rouge	55	48	Clr	Dayton	29	22	Clr	Houston	47	43	Rain	Montgomery	57	43	PCldy	Sacramento	52	31	Clr	Tucson	46	27	PCldy
Birmingham	50	39	PCldy	Daytona Beach	72	59	Clr	Huntsville	48	36	PCldy	Nashville	42	35	Clr	St. Louis	38	29	PCldy	Tulsa	34	28	Clr
Bismarck	48	3	Clr	Denver	26	11	Clr	Indianapolis	30	25	Clr	New Orleans	57	55	Clr	St. Petersburg	33	23	Clr	Tupelo	46	38	Clr
Boise	23	13	Clr	Detroit	28	23	Snow	Jackson, Miss.	49	42	Clr	New York City	35	28	Clr	St. Thomas	86	76	Clr	Waco	40	36	Rain
Boston	33	23	Clr	Duluth	14	3	Clr	Jacksonville	64	48	Clr	Newark	36	27	Clr	Salem, Ore.	31	21	Clr	Wichita Falls	33	31	Snow
Bridgport	35	25	PCldy	El Paso	48	32	Clr	Kansas City	34	24	PCldy	Norfolk, Va.	48	34	Clr	Salt Lake City	27	14	Clr	Wichita Falls	33	31	Snow
Brownsville	53	49	Rain	Elkins	30	23	Clr	Key West	80	72	PCldy	North Platte	28	6	Clr	San Angelo	37	30	Clr	Wichita Falls	33	31	Snow
Buffalo	28	25	Snow	Evansville	37	29	PCldy	Knoxville	45	33	PCldy	Omaha	30	14	Clr	San Antonio	58	42	Clr	Wichita Falls	33	31	Snow
Burlington, Vt.	21	7	Snow	Fargo	20	2	Snow	Lake Charles	50	48	Clr	Orlando	76	61	Clr	San Francisco	54	40	Clr	Wilmington, Del.	39	20	Clr
Caribou, Maine	21	7	Snow	Fairbanks	17	-2	Clr	Lansing	27	22	PCldy	Paducah	39	31	PCldy	San Jose	55	35	Clr	Yonkers	21	15	PCldy
Charleston, S.C.	58	41	PCldy	Fargo	20	2	Snow	Las Vegas	41	27	PCldy	Pendleton	20	16	Clr	San Juan, P.R.	84	70	Clr	Youngstown	25	20	Clr
Charleston, W.Va.	37	27	Clr	Flagstaff	25	7	Snow	Lexington	36	27	Clr	Peoria	32	22	Clr	Santa Fe	31	9	Snow				
Charlotte, N.C.	51	34	PCldy	Fort Smith	35	33	Snow	Lincoln	32	11	Clr	Philadelphia	38	29	Clr	St. Marie	20	7	Snow				
								Little Rock	37	35	Snow	Phoenix	51	35	PCldy	St. Michael	60	44	PCldy				
								Los Angeles	61	39	Clr	Pittsburgh	29	22	Clr	Seattle	42	32	PCldy				

National temperature extremes: Hi: Tue., 86, West Kendall, Fla. Lo: Tue., -34, Yellowstone Gate, Mont.



Frazz



Dilbert



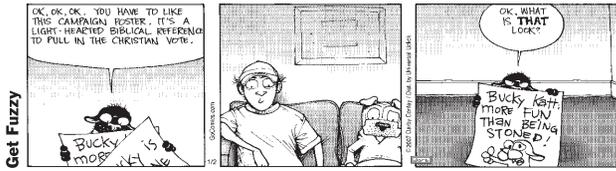
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13					14			
15			16					17			
18						19	20				
		21				22			23	24	25
26	27	28				29			30		
31				32				33			
34				35				36			
37			38				39				
			40				41		42	43	44
45	46	47				48	49				
50						51				52	
53						54				55	

- ACROSS**
- 1 Obese
 - 4 Kitchen VIP
 - 8 Jokes
 - 12 Eggs
 - 13 Atmosphere
 - 14 Urban disturbance
 - 15 Sieve
 - 17 Whirlpool
 - 18 One way to repay
 - 19 Expert
 - 21 Trigger's passer-gor
 - 22 Roam
 - 26 Cheney successor
 - 29 Toast topping
 - 30 A Gershwin brother
 - 31 GPS suggestion
 - 32 Salary
 - 33 Stumble
 - 34 S dispenser
 - 35 Pistol
 - 36 Bed cover
 - 37 Gosling's pop
 - 39 One (Sp.)
 - 40 Parisian pal
 - 41 Tranquil
 - 45 Effervescence
 - 48 Waste
 - 50 Sheltered
 - 51 Ankara denizen
 - 52 Whale group
 - 53 Evidenced a pin-prick
- DOWN**
- 54 Foolish folks
 - 55 Greek vowel
 - 25 Spellbound
 - 26 Boast
 - 27 Title
 - 28 Rhett's last word
 - 29 "Brady Bunch" sister
 - 32 Slang users' foes?
 - 33 Rose protector
 - 35 Jewel
 - 36 Futive folks
 - 38 Stunned
 - 39 Commandeer
 - 42 Advantage
 - 43 Spruced up
 - 44 Humorous
 - 45 Detergent brand
 - 46 Under the weather
 - 47 Last letter
 - 49 Sine — non

Answer to Previous Puzzle

R	E	A	R	T	A	L	C	A	D	O	
A	C	M	E	A	G	A	R	A	B	U	R
P	R	E	D	I	C	A	T	E	D	N	A
T	X	U	E	D	O	S	P	I	E	L	
W	Y	O	A	Z	T	E	C				
W	A	D	E	A	B	A	P	A	L	M	
A	G	E	M	O	P	T	E	A			
S	O	D	A	M	R	S	B	E	A	T	
I	N	G	O	T	O	R					
D	I	C	T	A	I	B	I	S	E	S	
E	R	A	V	I	N	D	I	C	A	T	E
M	O	T	E	R	I	E	K	I	N	E	
O	N	E	L	A	P	S	L	A	P		

1-2 CRYPTOQUIP

TPQAHWPJ KPGGBPAQWW RJL'W
 FALRA DL WQXKQ CQLCGQ
 CLPWLAQH TLLH: DJQ RPSFQH
 RPDSJ LT DJQ QBDW.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE SINGER PRESLEY STEPPED OUT OF THE AUCTION, EVERYONE SAID "ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BIDDING."
 Today's Cryptquip clue: R equals W

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OPINION

Amazing if Luddite N. Korea hacked Sony

By BARBARA DEMICK

North Korea has discovered that not only is the pen mightier than the sword, but malware may be more powerful than its nuclear deterrent.

For decades, North Korea's propaganda machine (nicknamed by a colleague of mine, Aidan Foster-Carter, the Great Vituperator) has churned out warnings of impending catastrophe and obliteration. Its propagandists regularly threaten to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire" and to engulf the region in "thermonuclear war" at a rally in July. Hyeon Pyong-so, director of the military's general political bureau, warned that North Korea would fire "our nuclear-armed rockets at the White House and Pentagon."

The threats are issued with sufficient frequency that they are usually shrugged off as pathetic pleas for attention. In Seoul, the "sea of fire" rhetoric is taken about as seriously as a forecast of rain showers; the threats barely make headlines in the South Korea press.

North Koreans could hardly have imagined that their threats would result in even the partial cancellation of Sony Pictures' "The Interview," a screwball comedy featuring an assassination of their leader, Kim Jong Un.

"They must be absolutely astounded at how Sony and the theaters collapsed," suggested a veteran North Korea analyst who spent much of his career parsing Pyongyang's rhetoric for the CIA. "The North Koreans hurl threats at the South Koreans all the time. Chosun Ilbo (a conservative South Korean newspaper) would have been shut down a million times if they took Pyongyang's threats seriously," he wrote me in an email.

Hacking Sony (assuming that Pyongyang is indeed behind the so-called Guard-

ians of Peace) is the least of North Korea's offenses; it is a country that keeps up to 200,000 people in a gulag and has reprocessed enough plutonium for 10 small nuclear bombs. But nothing of late has gotten the world to pay attention like the hack of Sony Pictures, which revealed such sensitive information as what Sony execs really think of Angelina Jolie and Aaron Sorkin.

Now comes what is presumed to be the "proportional" retaliation promised by President Barack Obama: North Korea's Internet crashed last week. It might, though, be less than proportional, given that North Korea barely uses the Internet.

There are reported to be only 1,024 IP addresses for the entire country of 25 million people. Academics use a closed intranet system called Kwangmyong (literally "walled garden") that is like an online Encyclopedia Britannica. Only top graduate students and a handful of the elite are allowed to use the Internet and only after registering which sites they visit. North Korean officials who do international business often use email, but they are not permitted to surf the Web. North Koreans I met this year in China told me they'd never even heard of the Internet until they'd left the country.

Kim Jong Un took over as North Korea's president three years ago, after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il. He was still in his 20s. (He is thought to be 31 now.) For lack of other qualifications, North Korea's propagandists spun Kim as the tech-savvy "young general" who would bring the country into the 21st century. When he graces the public with a punishment appearance, Kim often picks locations associated with youth (like Pyongyang's amusement park) or technology. After a mysterious six-week absence in autumn, Kim reappeared in mid-October to inaugurate the Wisong Scientists Residential District, for people who are "building a rich and powerful nation

by registering signal scientific and technological successes...with a high idea and beautiful dream."

Along with the nuclear program and missile building nurtured by Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un has presided over a rapid expansion in his country's military intelligence program. South Korean military intelligence told that country's Yonhap News Agency last summer that the number of hackers had nearly doubled to 5,900 from 3,000 two years earlier.

North Korea officially denies involvement with the Sony hack, all the while praising it as a "sacred drive for cooperation in the fight against the U.S. to defend human justice and conscience and to dismember the U.S. imperialist."

"The just struggle to be waged by them across the world will bring achievements thousands of times greater than the hacking attack on the Sony Pictures Entertainment," crowed a statement Sunday attributed to the Policy Department of the National Defense Commission.

Oddly, North Korea's strength might in fact be its own weakness. North Korea keeps its chronically hungry populace unplugged so they won't know what they are missing in the outside world; an added benefit is that the regime is relatively impervious to cyberintelligence. The bureaucracy still runs on carbon paper and hand-inked ledgers, the same as it always has. If there were ever to be an all-out cyberwar, the kind that results in mutually assured destruction, North Korea might be the last one standing. That must make their apparent triumph over Sony all the sweeter.

Barbara Demick, the author of "Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea," is on leave from the Los Angeles Times, where she is most recently Beijing bureau chief. She is completing follow-up work on "The Great Wall of Relations." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Was revenge a hidden rationale for torture?

By AVANI MEHTA SOOD

The Senate Intelligence Committee's "torture report" has reignited national debate on "enhanced" interrogation techniques. At the heart of this debate is the question: Do these methods work to prevent terrorist attacks?

Much of the American public seems to believe they do. Since the time the CIA's program was in force, and even now, national surveys have indicated that a majority of Americans say the use of torture is justified when it is used against suspected terrorists who may know details about future attacks. But is belief in the effectiveness of severe interrogation methods really what motivates support for those methods? Or is there a darker psychological motive?

Social psychology has long established that people are often mistaken about what drives their own viewpoints and behaviors. My research suggests that this may also hold true for attitudes toward interrogation. Although 96 percent of U.S. respondents surveyed say that coercive techniques should be used only to retrieve information that could prevent future harm, I have found that people are actually more likely to endorse the use of harsh interrogation if they think the target "deserves" to be punished.

Punishment can be justified in various ways, including being utilized as a means to or as a retributive end in itself, and psychologists have found that retribution is

a more dominant motive in punishment decisions. People want to see offenders "pay a price" for wrongful behavior, regardless of whether this leads to fewer offenses in the future. The information-gathering purpose of interrogation is entirely different from that of punishment, and support for severe interrogation may be similarly fueled by retributive impulses based on moral judgments about the person being interrogated.

For example, in one study I co-authored, a broadly representative sample of 246 American adults consistently recommended significantly more aggressive interrogation of a person they regarded as morally corrupt as compared with someone they saw as morally neutral. That was true whether they were told there was a 5 percent, 60 percent or 95 percent chance of obtaining intelligence from the detainee that could prevent future terrorist attacks.

The respondents in fact recommended significantly harsher interrogation of a target whom they judged to be immoral even when told there was no chance at all that he possessed useful knowledge. Critically, it was people's subjective ratings of the target's moral status, and not their belief in the effectiveness of interrogation, that drove their recommendations. Additional studies have found similar results.

The widespread rhetoric of evil and fear surrounding terrorism suspects has created a large risk that individuals who are detained for interrogation will automatically be seen as inherently bad. For example, in

a "Meet the Press" interview the Sunday after the torture report was made public, former Vice President Dick Cheney described the CIA's targets this way: "These are not American citizens, they are unlawful combatants, they are terrorists, they are people who have committed unlawful acts of war against the American people." And that's hardly the worst of the ways detainees have been characterized.

My research findings have serious implications. Public support for the use of severe interrogation may well have less to do with a quest for information than with a subconscious human instinct for vengeance, even though that is not the expressed purpose of interrogation.

As we as a nation consider the ramifications of the CIA's interrogation program, we must confront the possibility that the public may unknowingly endorse harsh tactics as a proxy for punishment. Imagine how the whole conversation would change if proponents of severe interrogation were to explicitly rationalize its use on the basis of revenge. Neglecting to acknowledge the unconscious retributive impulses that motivate support for enhanced interrogation risks the American people influencing policy, and being influenced by it, for a covert reason they might otherwise reject as ethically repugnant.

Avani Mehta Sood is a social psychologist and assistant professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

OPINION

Despite rebrand, Afghanistan still at war

By Max Boot

Imagine President Franklin Roosevelt announcing at the end of 1944, after the liberation of France but before the final defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, that World War II was over and that U.S. forces were ending combat operations. Instead we would support our allies, from Britain to China, in their fight against the Axis powers.

Hard to imagine, but that's roughly what happened Sunday when the International Security Assistance Command held a ceremony in Kabul to mark the "end" of the war in Afghanistan. "The longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion," President Barack Obama trumpeted in a statement from Hawaii, where he was vacationing.

If only it were possible to end a war unilaterally. But it's not. As the military likes to say, the enemy gets a vote. And there is no sign that the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, al-Qaida and other militant Islamist groups have any intention of ending their armed struggle to seize power in Kabul. Indeed, 2014 was the deadliest year of the war so far, with nearly 10,000 civilian casualties and some 5,000 deaths among the Afghan security forces — far more than the 2,356 Americans killed in Afghanistan in more than 13 years of combat operations since October 2001.

It's true that the Taliban have suffered significant losses since the start of a U.S. surge launched by Obama in 2010. The losses were most severe in the Taliban heartland of Helmand and Kandahar provinces in southern Afghanistan. But given the limitations of forces (Obama arbitrarily limited U.S. troop levels at 100,000 and time (Obama arbitrarily limited the surge to 18 months), the American offensive never had a serious chance of ending the insurgency, which continues to receive sanctuary and support in Pakistan.

And now the U.S. drawdown — troop levels have fallen to 10,500 — is likely to

give the Taliban a fresh burst of energy. At least Obama has not pulled out all U.S. troops as some of his advisers urged. But he has pulled out enough to imperil the ability of the Afghan security forces to control their country. Particularly worrisome is the complete pullout of all coalition personnel from Helmand province, where U.S. Marines fought so hard to roll back the Taliban.

A small number of coalition forces will remain in the south, but they will be at Kandahar Airfield, not in Helmand. Kandahar is one of only a handful of coalition bases that will remain, hundreds having already been closed. There will be one base in the east, one in the south, one in the center, one in the west and one in the north, and their designations will change. Regional Command-East (RC-E, in military shorthand), for example, now becomes Train, Advise, Assist Command-East, TAAACE.

This is part of a general rebranding of what can no longer be called a war effort. Goodbye, Operation Enduring Freedom, as the U.S. mission in Afghanistan has been known since 2001. Hello, Operation Resolute Support.

This transition is meant to convey the impression that the Afghan forces are self-sufficient, even though everyone knows they are not. This rhetorical legerdemain was similar to the way Obama rebranded the U.S. operation in Iraq in 2010, from Operation Iraqi Freedom to the Orwellian Operation New Dawn. Back then, too, U.S. combat forces were rebranded as "advise and assist" forces. This change was harmless enough, because far more U.S. forces remained in Iraq (52,000) than now remain in Afghanistan.

But the situation in Iraq took a perilous turn in the end of 2011 when Obama pulled out the remaining U.S. forces after having failed to negotiate a status-of-forces agreement with the Iraqi government. That cleared the way for Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to launch a sectarian crackdown on Sunnis, which, in turn, led



RAHIM FAIZ/AF

Afghan National Army soldiers raise the national flag during an ongoing operation in Kunar province, Afghanistan, on Sunday. The mountains in the remote eastern border region are dotted with the smoke of mortars and rockets fired by Taliban insurgents.

many Sunnis to embrace the Islamic State. The situation in Iraq has become so disastrous, in fact, that Obama has now sent back a small number of U.S. troops (some 3,000 so far authorized) and launched airstrikes on the Islamic State.

The Iraq situation shows the danger of a premature, unilateral withdrawal in the face of an undefeated enemy. Yet Obama appears set to repeat that mistake in Afghanistan. He has announced that by the end of 2015 U.S. forces in Afghanistan will be down to 5,000 and that by the end of 2016 they will be withdrawn altogether.

Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan's reformist

new president, has asked the administration to reconsider that timeline and to keep more U.S. forces in Afghanistan longer. That will seem to many Americans as a commitment to "endless" war but, in fact, the danger to U.S. forces will be relatively limited (they will not be on the front lines) and the good they can do will be vast by keeping the Taliban and other Islamist militant groups from retaking control of the country from which the 9/11 attack was launched.

Max Boot is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Kabul's eerie and dangerous, and it feels like deja vu

By Pamela Constable
The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan any winters ago, I stood in a vast, open intersection of central Kabul. The only sounds were the jingle of passing horse carts and the ticking spokes of old bicycles. There were no other Westerners on the streets, and all eyes were upon me. Despite being wrapped in many layers of modest clothing, I felt naked.

I knew here in the heart of Afghan capital since those haunted days under Taliban rule. Bombed-out ruins have been replaced by multi-story apartment buildings and ornate mansions. The populace has quintupled and traffic jams are constant. Cellphone and computer shops with picture windows line the streets, and beauty parlor signs feature women with pouting lips and geisha makeup.

But this winter, even as a frequent foreign visitor to Kabul, dressed modestly and with my head covered, I felt naked once again. Almost every Westerner I know here has left the country for good, their missions suspended or shut down, and several of my longtime Afghan acquaintances and colleagues have fled abroad and sought asylum.

The few old friends who remain stationed here, mostly professionals from international agencies, are either away for the holidays or shuttered inside guarded

compounds, ordered by security consultants to avoid public places and unable to visit the projects they sponsor.

The Taliban are back — this time not as the wary but proper official hosts who periodically issued visas to Western journalists and officials during the five-year truce from 1996 to 2001. Now they are cold-blooded insurgents who have been preying aggressively on the capital since a new civilian government took office in late September.

In the past two months, the militants have bombed or stormed foreign symbols and sanctuaries around the city — aid agencies, guest houses, even a performance at a French cultural center, while warning that they will treat Western civic activities exactly like military enemies. Among the targets were three compounds where I had once shared meals and laughter with friends — now long gone — who cared about Afghanistan and had no plans to leave.

Despite the superficial urban bustle, the atmosphere in the capital is tense and eerie. In the past several weeks, I have not had a single Westerner in my street. Not in the brightly lit supermarkets where shelves are stocked with corn flakes, cat litter and blue cheese to accommodate foreign customers' quirks.

Not in the antique shops where international visitors once came to sip green tea and bargain over lapis lazuli carvings, brocaded nomad costumes and prayer rugs

stitched with military scenes from the Afghan holy war against Soviet Russia. And not in the capital's legendary bookstore specializing in English-language works — though the owner, in a true act of faith, is currently remodeling and expanding his cave-like quarters into a spacious modern emporium and cafe with WiFi.

For the first time since ATMs were installed here several years ago, there is no one in line to use them, and they are not constantly running out of dollars. The once-thriving radio cab business is so dead that when I called for a taxi to ferry me to a U.N. office, the dispatcher was asleep and the driver said I was his first customer in days. I have not had the courage to drive by the Lebanese restaurant that was my cherished retreat for years, until it was destroyed in a Taliban siege last January that killed the owner and every patron inside.

I have spent other Christmases in Afghanistan, always a private occasion in a strict and insular Muslim society where converting to Christianity is both a capital crime and a sign of presumed mental derangement. But this holiday season seems especially desolate. There is no hint of festive cheer in the air, and even the snow, which usually blankets Kabul's drab streets by mid-December, has stayed away.

The only Nativity scene I have encountered was in a refugee settlement on the outskirts of the city, where I ventured on Christmas to interview people. I poked my

head into a mud-walled cave and beheld a mother with a baby swaddled in a cradle. A goat and a calf were keeping warm in the same room, and two buffaloes were lying in the next enclosure. I tried to explain to the camp leaders what this sight meant to me, but they were politely baffled.

New Year's is another hopeless cause. In Afghanistan, which still observes the ancient solar calendar, this is the year 1393, and Now Ruz, the Persian new year, will be celebrated several months from now when the spring equinox and the planting season arrive. In years past, there would have been various raucous New Year's Eve parties among the resident haraji, as all foreigners here are called, but this year? Fewer, more muted, and held under lock and key.

That's probably just as well, and not only because such gatherings would be a natural target for the Taliban. Although a few officials here are trying to put up a good front, there is little to celebrate at the moment. As the clock runs out on 2014, the new American-brokered government has failed to produce a Cabinet, the last NATO combat forces officially depart at midnight Thursday, and the insurgents are howling at the gates of the city. Perhaps the spring will bring signs of change, but for now it seems wise to remain circumspect, lie low, and huddle under thick winter clothing as invisibly as possible.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NFL

Big 12 tries to back up claim as top league

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
The Associated Press

DALLAS — The Big 12 has plenty of positive statistics, and winning teams, to back up its claim as the nation's top basketball conference.

This is a league with its only undefeated team unranked, having fallen out of the Top 25 this week despite a 44-point win.

Still, no other league can claim six Top 25 teams. There was a league-record seven before TCU (13-0) was replaced in this week's poll by Georgetown.

After No. 13 Kansas and Oklahoma State won Tuesday night, the Big 12 has seven teams with at least 10 wins and an overall record of 101-20 (83.5 winning percentage). That is the nation's best. No. 11 Texas, No. 17 West Virginia, No. 22 Baylor and Texas Tech also have won 10 games or more, and No. 9 Iowa State possibly joining that group Wednesday.

The Big 12 is on track to win at least 80 percent of its non-conference games for the first time in league history, and there was a two-week stretch earlier in December when its teams won 28 consecutive games.

There is a 24-14 record (.632) against the ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12 and SEC, helping push the Big 12 to No. 1 in RPI for conferences.

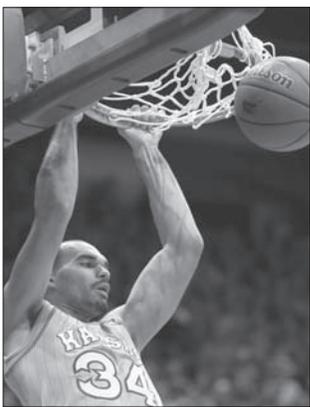
Here are a few other things to know about the Big 12, which opens league play Saturday:

Rebbed Cyclones: Iowa State went into this season confident of replacing Big 12 player of the year Melvin Ejim and DeAndre Kane, an honorable on the All-America team. The Cyclones (9-1) are the Big 12's highest-ranked team and have five players averaging double-figure scoring. Junior forward Georges Niang leads the way with 16.9 points, 5.5 rebounds and 4.2 steals a game. Fred Hoiberg, the Ames native who played for the Cyclones before a 10-year NBA career, on Wednesday could become the fastest Iowa State coach to 100 wins.

Forward Frogs: After going winless in its 18 Big 12 games last season, TCU is off to the best start in school history after going 13-0 in its non-conference games. The Horned Frogs last week went into the Top 25 for the first time since January 1999, when Billy Tubbs was their coach and the season after their last NCAA tournament appearance. This is coach Trent Johnson's third season, coinciding with TCU's time in the Big 12. The Frogs have been bolstered by the addition of Division I transfers Trey Zeigler (from Pittsburgh) and Chris Washburn (from UTPEP) and a mostly healthy roster. They open league play Saturday against West Virginia at home, which this season is a high school gym while their Fort Worth campus arena is being completely redone.

Young Jayhawks: Kansas had a 3-point loss to No. 1 Kentucky a week into the season, then lost by 25 points at Temple in its last game before Christmas. The young Jayhawks have won their other 10 games. "That's one great thing about youth. They don't know. They can't remember," coach Bill Self said. The Jayhawks are led by junior Perry Ellis, but their next seven top scorers are sophomores or freshmen. The Jayhawks, slot No. 2 in the latest RPI ratings, play UNLV at home on Saturday before their Big 12 opener at Baylor on Jan. 7.

Ranked opener: Baylor lost more than half of



ORLIN WAGNER/AP

Kansas' Perry Ellis dunks against Kent State on Tuesday. Ellis is a junior, but the Jayhawks' next seven top scorers are sophomores or freshmen.

its scoring and rebounding from another Sweet 16 team, and senior point guard Kenny Chery was bothered at times this season by a foot injury, but the Bears (11-1) have dropped only an eight-point game against Illinois. They will get an early test in Big 12 play, opening Saturday at Oklahoma before facing Kansas it its Big 12 home opener next week.

Experienced scorers: While there are plenty of talented young players in the Big 12, the upper classmen dominated the league's top scorers going into this week. Oklahoma State senior Le'Bryan Nash led the Big 12 with 17.6 points a game. Of the top 13 scorers, six are seniors, six are juniors and the only sophomore is Kansas State's Marcus Foster, whose 15 points a game ranked seventh in the league.

Top 25 fared

Tuesday

1. Kentucky (13-0) did not play. Next: vs. Mississippi, Tuesday.
2. Duke (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. Wofford, Wednesday.
3. Virginia (12-0) beat Davidson 83-72. Next: at Miami, Saturday.
4. Wisconsin (12-1) did not play. Next: vs. Penn State, Wednesday.
5. Louisville (12-1) beat Long Beach State 63-48. Next: at Wake Forest, Sunday.
6. Villanova (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. Butler, Wednesday.
7. Gonzaga (13-1) did not play. Next: at Portland, Saturday.
8. Arizona (12-1) did not play. Next: vs. Arizona State, Sunday.
9. Iowa State (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. MSU, Wednesday.
10. Utah (10-2) beat Carroll (Mont.) 85-69. Next: vs. Southern Cal, Friday.
11. Texas (11-2) did not play. Next: at Texas Tech, Saturday.
12. Maryland (13-1) beat Michigan State 68-66, 2OT. Next: vs. Minnesota, Saturday.
13. Kansas (10-2) beat Kent State 78-62. Next: vs. UNLV, Sunday.
14. Notre Dame (13-1) beat Hartford 87-60. Next: vs. Georgia Tech, Saturday.
15. St. John's (11-1) did not play. Next: at Seton Hall, Wednesday.
16. Wichita State (10-2) did not play. Next: at Drake, Wednesday.
17. West Virginia (12-1) beat Virginia Tech 82-51. Next: at TCU, Saturday.
18. Oklahoma (8-3) did not play. Next: vs. George Mason, Wednesday.
19. North Carolina (10-3) beat William & Mary 86-64. Next: at Clemson, Saturday.
20. Ohio State (11-3) lost to Iowa 71-65. Next: vs. Illinois, Saturday.
21. Washington (11-1) did not play. Next: at California, Friday.
22. Baylor (11-1) beat Norfolk State 92-51. Next: vs. No. 18 Oklahoma, Saturday.
23. Northern Iowa (11-1) did not play. Next: at Evansville, Thursday.
24. Colorado State (13-0) did not play. Next: vs. Boise State, Wednesday.
25. Georgetown (8-3) did not play. Next: at Xavier, Wednesday.

Suh wins appeal, can play vs. Dallas

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Lions defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh can play in Detroit's wild-card game after his one-game NFL suspension was reduced to a \$70,000 fine.

Hearing officer Ted Cottrell heard Suh's expedited appeal Tuesday and ruled that Suh can play Sunday at Dallas but must pay the fine.

Suh originally was suspended for stepping on Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers' left leg twice last Sunday in a loss to Green Bay for the NFC North title. He stepped on Rodgers once with each foot, which violated unnecessary roughness rules, according to the league.

But Cottrell, jointly appointed by the NFL and the players' union, rescinded the suspension.

The Lions said they would not comment until Wednesday, when Suh will be available at their training camp.

One Cowboys defensive player, end Jeremy Mincey, seemed surprised by Cottrell's decision.

"I didn't understand that," Mincey said. "You've got to play the game the right way. I'm not knocking him. I like his inten-

sity. I love how hard he plays. But there comes a point where you've got to think before you react.

"Sometimes it happens. I've done plays like what Suh did, so I'm not mad at him. It happens like that sometimes. You're frustrated, you're down and you're losing and things like that."

Suh has been fined eight times in his career, but this is the first in 2014.

The suspension was imposed Monday by Merton Hanks, the NFL's vice president of football operations. Hanks ruled that Suh engaged in a non-football act that placed his opponent at unnecessary risk of injury.

In his letter to Suh, Hanks wrote, "You did not respond in the manner of someone who had lost his balance and accidentally contacted another player who was lying on the ground. This illegal contact, specifically the second step and push off with your left foot, clearly could have been avoided."

Cottrell's decision means the Lions will have one of their key defensive cogs. Suh finished the season with a team-high 8½ sacks and helped Detroit rank second overall and first in run defense.

Steelers sign RB Tate

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Le'Veon Bell spent Tuesday testing his hyperextended right knee on an exercise bike. The Pittsburgh Steelers spent it preparing for life without their most valuable player.

The Steelers signed well-traveled running back Ben Tate as a backup plan in case Bell's knee doesn't respond in time for Saturday night's wild-card game against Baltimore. The sight of his budding star grinding through a workout might have been encouraging, but Tomlin hardly seems optimistic, pointing out "there won't be any bikes on the field."

Instead, there will be the NFL's fourth-ranked run defense, one bolstered by the return of nose tackle Haloti Ngata following a four-game suspension for using Aikaterin. Even if Bell gets medical clearance, Tomlin admitted he's not even sure he's going to give the OK for Bell to play.

Tate began the season atop the depth chart in Cleveland but saw his playing time decrease as his production dwindled. He eventually lost his starting job to rookies Terrace West and Isaiah Crowell and was cut in November. Minnesota signed the former second-round pick, but Tate had just 38 yards on 13 carries in three games before getting released.

The 26-year-old now finds himself as Pittsburgh's most experienced option as the AFC North champions brace a playoff showdown with Baltimore. Rookies Josh Harris and Dr. Arthur combined for 56 yards rushing on the season.

Tomlin said it might be unfair to ask any of the trio to fill Bell's role by themselves. Bell set franchise records for yards from scrimmage (2,215) and receptions by a running back (83). "I don't know what you're talking about replacing an impact guy like him it's not a one-man job, it never is," Tomlin said.

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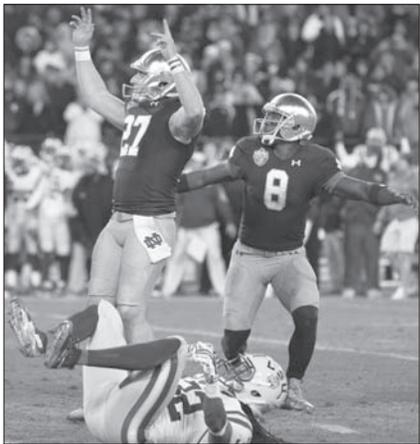
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COLLEGE FOOTBALL/NHL



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Notre Dame kicker Kyle Brindza, left, and holder Malik Zaire watch Brindza's game-winning, 32-yard field goal as time expires Tuesday at the Music City Bowl. Trying to block the kick was LSU's Jalen Collins.

Bowls roundup

Notre Dame wins on last-second FG

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Kyle Brindza kicked a 32-yard field goal as time expired, and Notre Dame upset No. 22 LSU 31-28 in a Music City Bowl shootout Tuesday.

Notre Dame (8-5) stopped a fake field goal just short of the goal line at the end of the first half and blocked a 40-yard field goal attempt by Trent Domingue early in the fourth quarter. The Fighting Irish got the ball with 5:41 left and never gave it back, driving 71 yards in 14 plays before Brindza finished off the win.

Cosch Brian Kelly gave sophomore Malik Zaire his first career start, but he also played senior Everett Golson, using both quarterbacks on the winning drive.

LSU (8-5) lost for the first time this season to a team not from the SEC Western Division. Leonard Fournette ran for 143 yards and two touchdowns, and the freshman also returned a kickoff 100 yards for a score.

Belt Bowl

No. 13 Georgia 37, No. 20 Louisville 14: Freshman Nick Chubb ran for a career-high 266 yards and two touchdowns, and Georgia overcame an injury to starting quarterback Hutson Mason to beat Louisville in the Belt Bowl at Charlotte, N.C.

Chubb averaged 8 yards per carry and the Bulldogs (10-3) piled up 301 yards rushing against the nation's second-best run defense.

Mason threw for 149 yards and a touchdown before leaving with blurred vision in the second quarter with the Bulldogs ahead 20-7. He was replaced by Brice Ramsey, whose primary duty was to hand the ball off to Chubb.

Georgia's defense came up with four turnovers, with Dominic Sanders recording two interceptions.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Kyle Bolin made his first career start for Louisville and finished 20-for-40 for 301 yards with two interceptions and one touchdown. Brandon Radcliff ran for 91 yards and a touchdown.

Foster Farms Bowl

Stanford 45, Maryland 21: Kevin Hogan threw for 189 yards and two touchdowns, Remound Wright ran for three short scores and Stanford overwhelmed Maryland in the Foster Farms Bowl at Santa Clara, Calif.

On a chilly, windy night in Silicon Valley, the Cardinal (8-5) blew past the Terrapins with the kind of complete performance that had eluded them most of the season. Stanford outgained Maryland 414 to 222 yards and looked right at home at Levi's Stadium, about 11 miles from its campus.

It was the most points scored in a bowl game in Stanford history. Maryland missed a chance for its first postseason win since 2010, when it beat East Carolina in the Military Bowl. The Terrapins (7-6) lost three of their final four games.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference										
Atlantic Division										
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA				
Montreal	37	24	11	2	50	109	85			
Tampa Bay	38	23	11	4	50	122	99			
Ottawa	37	21	15	9	47	105	94			
Toronto	37	20	14	3	43	124	111			
Florida	34	16	9	9	41	80	88			
Boston	37	19	15	11	41	88	99			
Ottawa	36	15	14	7	37	97	99			
Buffalo	37	15	20	2	31	75	123			
Metropolitan Division										
Pittsburgh	36	22	9	5	49	109	86			
N.Y. Islanders	36	24	11	1	49	112	101			
Washington	36	18	11	7	43	105	94			
N.Y. Rangers	34	15	11	1	42	102	87			
Philadelphia	36	14	16	6	34	100	109			
Columbus	38	15	16	7	33	86	109			
New Jersey	38	13	19	7	33	88	108			
Carolina	36	10	22	4	24	72	98			

Western Conference										
Central Division										
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA				
Chicago	37	25	10	2	52	117	78			
Nashville	36	24	9	3	51	106	78			
St. Louis	37	22	9	2	47	108	93			
Winnipeg	37	19	11	7	45	94	87			
Minnesota	34	17	13	4	38	99	96			
Dallas	35	16	14	5	37	102	118			
Colorado	36	13	15	8	34	92	109			
Pacific Division										
Anaheim	38	24	8	6	54	107	101			
Vancouver	35	21	11	3	45	103	94			
Los Angeles	38	18	12	8	44	103	94			
San Jose	37	19	13	5	43	101	96			
Calgary	38	20	15	3	45	110	100			
Arizona	36	14	18	4	32	85	115			
Edmonton	37	9	22	3	23	79	127			

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Monday's games									
Chicago 5, Nashville 4, SO									
Boston 5, Detroit 1									
New Jersey 3, Pittsburgh 1									
N.Y. Islanders 4, Washington 3, OT									
Carolina 1, Toronto 1									
Ottawa 5, Buffalo 2									
Tampa Bay 3, Toronto 2									
St. Louis 3, Colorado 0									
Minnesota 3, Winnipeg 2									
Dallas 3, N.Y. Rangers 2									
Calgary 2, Los Angeles 1									
Arizona 4, Philadelphia 2									

Tuesday's games									
Montreal 2, Florida 1, SO									
Edmonton 3, Los Angeles 5, SO									
Nashville 3, St. Louis 2									
Vancouver 3, San Jose 2									
Wednesday's games									
N.Y. Islanders at Winnipeg									
Tampa Bay at Buffalo									
N.Y. Rangers at Florida									
Toronto at Boston									
Carolina at Pittsburgh									
Minnesota at Columbus									
New Jersey at Detroit									
San Jose at Anaheim									
Arizona at Dallas									
Philadelphia at Colorado									
Edmonton at Calgary									

Thursday's games									
Chicago vs. Washington at Washington, DC									
Los Angeles at Vancouver									
Florida at Buffalo									
Montreal at New Jersey									
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh									
Philadelphia at Carolina									
Toronto at Minnesota									
Edmonton at Colorado									
N.Y. Islanders at Calgary									
St. Louis at Anaheim									

Tuesday									
Canucks 3, Sharks 1									
Vancouver	1	2	0	3					
San Jose	0	1	0	1					
First Period—1, Vancouver, Horvat 2 (Dorsett, Stanton), 3:08.									
Second Period—2, Vancouver, Hansen 9 (Eder, Richardson), 3:05, 3, San Jose, Thornton (penalty shot), 4:36, 4, Vancouver, Vrbata 14 (H.Sedin, B.Sedin), 7:07.									
Shots on Goal—Vancouver 7-7-21, San Jose 11-12-30.									
Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 0 of 0; San Jose 0 of 4.									
Penalty minutes—Miller 19-19 (32 shots-3 saves), San Jose, Stalock 4-4 (21-18).									
A—17,562 (17,562), T—2:26.									

Canadiens 2, Panthers 1 (SO)									
Montreal	0	0	1	1					
Florida	0	0	1	0					
Montreal won shootout 1-0									
Shots on Goal—Montreal 6-2-14, Florida 17-14-37.									
Power-play opportunities—Montreal 0 of 2; Florida 0 of 3.									
Goals—Montreal, Tokarski 4-1 (37 shots-3 saves), Florida, Luongo 14-7 (34-33).									
A—19,614 (17,040), T—2:45.									

Predators 3, Blues 2									
St. Louis	0	2	0	2					
Nashville	1	1	1	3					
First Period—1, Nashville, Weber 7 (Jokinen, Bourque), 18:05.									
Second Period—2, St. Louis, Butler 2 (Bakkes), SO, 3, St. Louis, Oshie 6 (Bakkes, Steen), 16:29, 4, Nashville, Bourque 2 (Jokinen, Gaustad), 16:06.									
Third Period—5, Nashville, Weber 8 (Jokim, Ryz) (sh).									
Shots on Goal—St. Louis 8-8-12-28, Nashville 12-18-17-47.									
Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 0 of 4; Nashville 4 of 5.									
Goals—St. Louis, Elliott 8-5-1 (47 shots-4 saves), Nashville, Rinne 24-6-2 (28-26).									
A—17,401 (17,113), T—2:38.									

Oilers 3, Kings 2 (SO)									
Los Angeles	0	2	0	2					
Edmonton	1	1	0	3					
Edmonton won shootout 1-0									
First Period—1, Edmonton, Hendricks 3 (O'Roy, Kieboom), 4:37.									
Second Period—2, Edmonton, Nugent-Hopkins 11 (Hall), 13:32.									
Third Period—3, Los Angeles, Doughty 4 (Carter), 10:02, 4, Los Angeles, Muzzin 5 (Gaborik, Kopitar), 17:35 (pp).									
Shootout—Los Angeles 0 (Carter, Ng, Kopitar, NG, Toifl, Ng, Ju-Williams NG), Edmonton 1 (O'Roy, NG, Eberle, NG, Hendricks NG, Perron G).									
Shots on Goal—Los Angeles 7-15-15-2-39, Edmonton 6-10-1-4-21.									
Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 1 of 3; Edmonton 0 of 3.									
Penalty minutes—Edmonton, Quick 15-9-7 (21 shots-19 saves), Edmonton, Scrivens 6-13-5 (29-37).									
A—16,839 (16,839), T—2:42.									

NHL roundup

Canucks hold off Sharks

The Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jannik Hansen angered the San Jose Sharks with his hit to Tommy Wingels' head. They got even more upset when he scored immediately after leaving the penalty box.

Hansen's goal turned the momentum in the second period, and Ryan Miller stopped one of two penalty shots he faced to help the Vancouver Canucks snap a four-game road losing streak by beating the Sharks 3-1 on Tuesday night.

"It swings momentum," Hansen said. "These guys are so good on the power play. If they don't score they create momentum. They were getting opportunities. But scoring right at the end of theirs that kind of turned everything in our favor and we were able to get a little bit of breathing room."

Bo Horvat and Radim Vrbata also scored for the Canucks, who have won their last three games in San Jose. Vancouver bounced back from a lackluster loss in Anaheim on Sunday to get a key win against a division rival.

Miller made 31 saves in all but the first period, but he was the seventh straight time he stopped Joe Pavelski's penalty shot in the first period and then allowed a goal on one to Joe Thornton in the second.

"I was pretty wild," Miller said. "I was waiting for a third. Everything kind of happens in thirds."

Predators 3, Blues 2: Shea Weber scored twice to lead host Nashville over St. Louis.

Gabriel Bourque added a goal for Nashville, which has won two of three.

Chris Butler and T.J. Oshie scored for St. Louis, but the Blues lost for the fifth time in six games despite the return of No. 1 goalie Brian Elliott.

Canadiens 2, Panthers 1 (SO): Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau scored the only goal in the shootout to lift visiting Montreal over Florida.

Parenteau's shot glanced off the glove of Roberto Luongo and went into the net in the third round of the tiebreaker.

Jonathan Huberdeau missed on the ensuing attempt, and Montreal improved to 5-1 in shootouts.

Oilers 3, Kings 2 (SO): David Perron's shootout goal snapped host Edmonton's nine-game losing streak in a victory over defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles.

Matt Hendricks and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored in regulation for the Oilers (8-22-7), who won for just the second time in 22 games. It was also just their second win against a Western Conference opponent (2-18-6).



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Florida right wing Brad Boyes, left, and Montreal right wing Brendan Gallagher scramble for the puck during the third period of Tuesday's game in Sunrise, Fla. Montreal won 2-1 in a shootout.

YEAR
IN REVIEW

2014

ASSOCIATED PRESS MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Gigantic run

Bumgarner's playoff roll was, quite simply, the stuff of legend

By JANIE McCAULEY
The Associated Press

MADISON BUMGARNER sat in the outfield alongside Jake Peavy before Game 7 of the World Series and told his teammate exactly what needed to happen: Tim Hudson would work a few innings and get the ball to Bumgarner, who would hand it off to the bullpen to finish the championship.

Peavy quickly offered his own prediction that Bumgarner would end it himself.

That's exactly what MadBum did, following up a pair of World Series wins with a save at Kansas City to close out San Francisco's third title in five years and cap a brilliant postseason that made him a household name — or, at the very least, a household nickname. He is the 2014 Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year.

"I was sitting in the outfield with Madison and he was asking me how

I thought this game was going to

play out," Peavy recalled this month. "I said to him: 'Madison, when you get the ball, you're not coming out of the game. You're the best guy we've got.' ... He said, 'Man, that's exactly what I hoped you would

'When you've got a healthy guy who's on a roll, those are the kind of guys who change big series and do special things.'

Dave Righetti

Giants pitching coach

say' and exactly what he wanted. He just needed some confirmation, somebody to believe in him as well. I said, 'Fight for that ball, man,' and what he did will go down in the ages as the best ever."

The shaggy-haired left-hander who takes as much pride in his pitching and durability as he does his deep North Carolina roots, Bumgarner became October's biggest star for a San Francisco club that really needed one during another improbable World Series

run.

Bumgarner finished first in a vote by U.S. editors and news directors. He beat out Dodgers pitcher Clayton Kershaw — who won the National League Cy Young and MVP but lost to Bumgarner's Giants in the playoffs. Retiring New York Yankees star Derek Jeter and golfer Rory McIlroy tied for third place. The award was announced Tuesday.

After months of the same questions about his well-tested left arm, Bumgarner made light of it all.

He had just thrown 270 innings, including 21 with two wins and a save in a World Series that went the distance against the fellow wild-card Royals.

"I got a splinter in my finger the other day. That was kind of painful," Bumgarner quipped, sounding perfectly serious. "Fortunately, it was on my right hand."

Bruce Bochy's 25-year-old workhorse has earned the manager's trust that he will speak up if anything ever feels off with his arm. Otherwise, he's going to keep getting the ball.

With that tricky cross-body, three-quarters delivery — resembling a sling shot — Bumgarner shows hitters the ball briefly with an outstretched arm before that rapid release and suddenly it's right there leaving batters baffled.

On two days' rest in Game 7, that day he sat with Peavy in Kansas City, he pitched five scoreless innings of relief in a 3-2 win.

Only after that did Bumgarner acknowledge he might need a mental and physical break at last after tossing a record 52½ postseason innings.

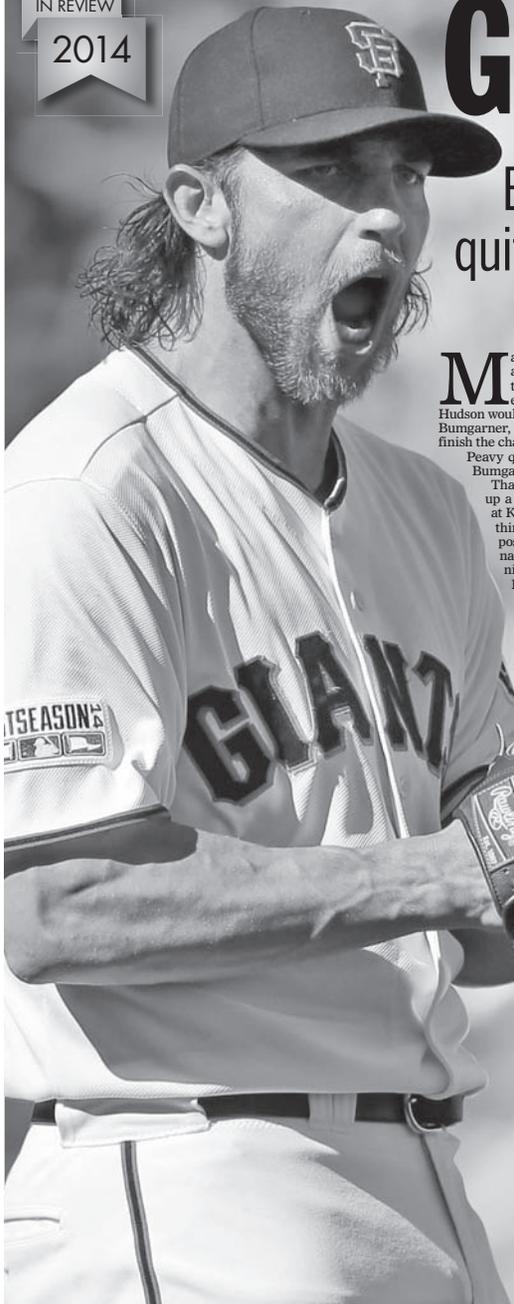
"You know what? I can't lie to you anymore," he said. "I'm a little tired now."

Pitching coach Dave Righetti began fielding inquiries before the World Series began about whether Bumgarner had the chance to make three appearances. He knew it could happen, though it wasn't exactly planned.

"You don't realize when you're in the middle of the eye, 'Wow, what this guy's doing is so special,'" Righetti said. "That really hasn't been done in years. ... When you've got a healthy guy who's on a roll, those are the kind of guys who change big series and do special things."

San Francisco pitcher Madison Bumgarner was 4-1 in the postseason, including two victories in the World Series and a Game 7 save that gave the Giants their third title in five seasons. He's the 2014 Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP



ASSOCIATED PRESS FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

YEAR
IN REVIEW

2014

Mo'ne Davis came out of nowhere ... and then she was everywhere

By ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

No one in the sports world had heard of the 2014 Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year until August. That's when 13-year-old Mo'ne Davis became an instant celebrity as she took the pitching mound in baseball's Little League World Series and mowed down batter after batter, giving "throw like a girl" a whole new meaning.

Power pitcher

She became the first girl to win a Little League World Series game, and her performance dazzled fans young and old. Her steely gaze and demeanor on the mound were intimidating. Off the field, she shined in interviews.

Davis appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated, has her jersey displayed in baseball's Hall of Fame and was named Sports Kid of the Year by Sports Illustrated Kids.

She met the Obamas at the White House, starred in a Spike Lee-directed car commercial (the NCAA said it wouldn't hurt her eligibility), marched in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade along with her Taneey Dragons teammates and presented Pharrell Williams with Soul Train's "Song of the Year" award.

The talented three-sport star and honor student from South Philadelphia handled all the attention with poise, modesty and maturity.

"A lot of adults around me help out, taught me to be respectful, to be calm during everything and not let anything get to you," Davis said after learning of her latest honor.

A vote by U.S. editors and news directors selected Davis as the Female Athlete of the Year. The youngest winner in history, Davis beat out Mt. St. Joseph freshman Lauren Hill — who played her first college basketball game while battling terminal brain cancer — and three-time winner Serena Williams.

Davis tossed a two-hitter to help Philadelphia beat Nashville 4-0 in the Series opener for both teams. Davis, the first girl to appear for a U.S. team in South Williamsport since 2004, had eight strikeouts and no walks. Her team was eventually eliminated after losing to teams from Las Vegas and Chicago. Davis gave up three runs in the Las Vegas game, and could not take the mound against Chicago because of pitch limits.

After the tournament, Davis was everywhere.

She threw whiffle balls to Jimmy Fallon on NBC's "Tonight Show," threw out the first pitch at Game 4 of the Little League World Series and signed a book deal.

While others are still talking about her Little League performance, Davis is concentrating on basketball. The eighth-grade point guard already plays for the high school varsity team. She aspires to play for the University of Connecticut and reach the WNBA. Davis plays midfielder on her soccer team and hopes to play three sports in high school, although she's not sure about baseball.

Steve Bandura, a recreation leader for the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department and director of the Anderson Monarchs sports programs, has helped coach Davis since she started playing sports. His son, Scott, was the catcher for Taneey. Bandura said Davis has maintained her "natural personality" no matter how many cameras or microphones are in her face.

"She's still the same person, still a kid who wants to do kid things," he said. "She has fun meeting celebrities and all that but the bottom line is she loves to play sports, go to school and have fun. The adults make a bigger deal out of it."

Davis knows she has become a role model.

Her message to everyone, especially girls: "Always follow your dreams. If there's something people tell you that you can't do it, go for it."



Mo'ne Davis became an instant celebrity in August when she became the first girl to win a Little League World Series game.

GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

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ASSOCIATED PRESS GAMES OF THE YEAR

Seeing is believing

For better or worse, some games left indelible mark on viewers

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

They kept us on the edge of our seats and brought us to our feet. They sent us into joyful celebration or left us in anguished disbelief.

When we look back at 2014, these are some of the games — not to mention stock car races, tennis finals and golf rounds — we'll remember the most.

Iron man Bumgarner

So much for pitch counts and pampered arms. Madison Bumgarner almost single-handedly pitched the San Francisco Giants to their third World Series title in five years with three masterful performances against the upstart Kansas City Royals. He won the opener with seven innings of one-hit ball and pitched a four-hit shutout with 117 pitches in Game 5. But the drawing left-hander will be remembered most for his performance in Game 7, when he threw five innings of scoreless relief on two days rest for a decisive 3-2 victory. The last of his 68 pitches came with the potential tying run at third, resulting in a series-ending pop. "You know what?" he would say about a half-hour later. "I'm a little tired now."

Shootout in Sochi

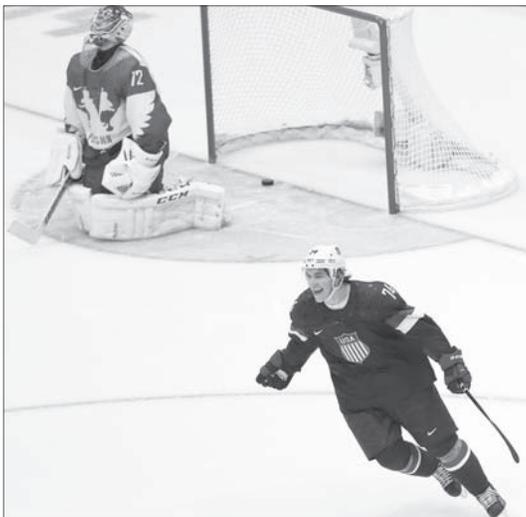
T.J. Oshie was one of the last choices to the U.S. Olympic hockey team, but he sure came up big in Sochi. Facing the Russians and their screaming hometown crowd, including President Vladimir Putin, Oshie scored on four out of six chances in a shootout to give the Americans a thrilling 3-2 victory. Oshie scored in the first round and the shootout was still tied after three attempts by each team. At that point, under international rules, the same shooter can be used over and over again. The Americans kept turning to Oshie, five times in a row, before he put a forehead through the goalie's legs for his fourth goal in six chances. "At some point, you think, 'Does he have any more moves left?'" U.S. captain Zach Parise said.

Brazil blowout

For a soccer-mad nation hosting the World Cup for the first time since 1950, it was championship or bust. Oh, what a bust it was. Brazil was blown out by Germany 7-1 in the semifinals, the biggest rout ever that far along in the tournament. The Germans were unstoppable, scoring five goals in the first half-hour — four of them in a seven-minute span. "It was very important to stay calm, cool and courageous in facing Brazilian passion," said the winning coach, Joachim Loew, whose team went to capture the title that was supposed to go to the home team. For Brazil, there was nothing but heartache, a nation plunging into mourning at the unimaginable result. "We apologize to all Brazilians," defender David Luiz said.

Wild night in Waco

In a Big 12 showdown, neither team played a lick of defense until Marcus Mallret returned an interception 49 yards for a



USA forward T.J. Oshie reacts after scoring the winning goal against Russia goaltender Sergei Bobrovski in the shootout of their hockey game at the Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

touchdown with 11½ minutes remaining, giving TCU a seemingly comfortable 58-37 lead over Baylor. Turns out, no lead was safe against Bears quarterback Bryce Petty. He led three lightning-quick touchdown drives

to tie the game, then drove Baylor into position for Chris Callahan's 28-yard field goal as time expired for a beyond-improbable 61-58 victory. "I just knew looking at guys' faces that we were going to come back in that game," Petty said. "Twenty-one points isn't a big deal for us."

Colts comeback

Speaking of comebacks, the Colts pulled off a memorable one of their own in an AFC wild-card playoff game. Kansas City led 38-10 early in the third quarter, but Indianapolis scored 35 second-half points for the second-biggest rally in NFL postseason history. Andrew Luck threw for 443 yards and four touchdowns, shaking off three interceptions. He also scored a touchdown on a fumble recovery. The teams combined for 1,049 yards, a playoff record. Not enough, it turned out, for Kansas City to end a 20-year drought since its last playoff win.

Shockers shocked

Wichita State had not lost since the previous year's Final Four and took a 35-0 record into its third-round game against Kentucky, a team that had underachieved after starting the year ranked No. 1. The game went back and forth the entire way, the margin never more than five points over the final 18½ minutes. The Wildcats finally went ahead for good, 73-71, when James Young knocked down a three-pointer with less than 2 minutes to go. The Shockers had a chance to win it and stay

on course to be the first unbeaten national champion since Indiana in 1976. Fred VanVleet's three-pointer bounced off the side of the rim as the horn sounded. Kentucky 78, Wichita State 76.

Durant brings Thunder

Memphis had a 98-93 lead in Game 2 of the NBA playoffs with just under 20 seconds remaining. But Oklahoma City had Kevin Durant, who came up with what might be shot of the year — a towering three-pointer from the corner as he was tumbling out of bounds. Nothing but net. Plus, he was fouled by Marc Gasol and knocked down the free throw to complete a four-point play. The Thunder wound up sending the game to overtime, but the Grizzlies bounced back from the shock of Durant's amazing shot to win handily, 111-105.

Wimbledon classic

Novak Djokovic was on the verge of finishing off Roger Federer in the fourth set of the Wimbledon final. The 33-year-old Swiss star would not go that easy. With Djokovic serving for the match at 5-3, Federer broke for the first time all day. He went on to win five straight games, forcing a decisive set that pushed this one into classic territory. Djokovic held on after nearly four hours of momentum shifts, winning 6-7 (7), 6-4, 7-6 (4), 5-7, 6-4 to deny Federer his record eighth title at the All-England Club. "I respect your career and everything you have done," Djokovic told Federer afterward. "And thank you for letting me win today."

Winning in the gloaming

After golf's first three majors failed to produce much drama, the PGA Championship turned out to be a pure theater with an All-Star cast. Rory McIlroy, Phil Mickelton, Rickie Fowler and Henrik Stenson all held a share of the lead on the back nine. The final two hours were filled with eagles and birdies, with tension and chaos. Finally, with darkness threatening to push the finale to the next morning, McIlroy knocked in a 10-inch putt that gave him a one-stroke victory over Mickelton. It was *Boy Wonder's* second straight major title and fourth overall, making him just the fourth player in the last century to win that many before his 26th birthday. The other three? Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Bobby Jones. Not bad company.

Race for the title

While it may seem a bit like pro wrestling in the way it tries to manipulate the results, NASCAR got what it was looking for in the latest version of the Sprint Cup championship. Kevin Harvick pulled off a relentless dash through the field, going from 12th to first over the final 15 laps to claim his first title in the final race of the year at Homestead. He beat three other drivers also seeking their first titles: Denny Hamlin, Ryan Newman and Joey Logano. "If you want to win the championship, you're going to have to figure out how to win races," Harvick said. "In the end, that's what it came down to."



Baylor quarterback Bryce Petty looks to pass against TCU on Nov. 30, when Petty rallied the Bears from a 58-37 deficit in the final 11½ minutes to win.

RON JENKINS, FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/TNS

ASSOCIATED PRESS TOP 10 SPORTS STORIES

YEAR
IN REVIEW

2014

Top: NFL made headlines with off-field issues

FROM BACK PAGE

against the NFL for not adhering to its own discipline rules.

Peterson, who pleaded no contest to misdemeanor reckless assault for injuring his 4-year-old son with a branch, has been suspended indefinitely and is eligible to apply for reinstatement next year. He was suing to have the suspension repealed, though with the Minnesota Vikings' season ending on Sunday, he won't be returning this season.



Peterson

But Peterson's court case, the eventual return of either of the running backs, or the appearance of new cases against players in a league that has averaged more than six domestic-abuse arrests a year, according to a USA Today database, all have the potential to keep domestic abuse and

the NFL's handling of it in the headlines.

And the report from former FBI director Robert Mueller — who is trying to find out, among other things, when, exactly, the league knew about the inside-the-elevator video of Rice's punch — will likely come out soon to spawn yet another series of news cycles.

While all that plays out, the NFL has to keep working at restoring its image and making some policy changes.

The new policy calls for a six-game suspension without pay for violations involving assault, sexual assault, battery, domestic violence, child abuse, and other forms of family violence. It also calls for the league to hire a special counsel to handle investigations, and mete out the initial punishment. It keeps Goodell in position to handle appeals, something the union disagrees with considering his history, not only in the Rice and Peterson cases but in cases dealing with illegal drugs, doping, and other player conduct.

"If you put together a plan, you have to consider all your stakeholders. You'd think the union would be high on that list," crisis-management expert Jonathan Bernstein said. "You can't impose a significant change of direction in any organization without getting some buy-in from the stakeholders first."

Among the stakeholders whose confidence in Goodell has not budged are the owners, a group of 32 multimillionaires who owe at least some of their wealth to the commissioner's business acumen, and have not seen much backlash from the advertisers that bankroll the league.

And the fans: TV ratings have barely budged, attendance is steady, and fans play fantasy football to the tune of billions of dollars.

"I expect they'll regain credibility, but it'll take some time and distance," said Michael Gordon of Group Gordon, a corporate and crisis PR firm in New York. "If they don't handle it well going forward, then yes, eventually it'll hurt them."

2. Clippers' Sterling banned: Donald Sterling had withstood accusations of racism throughout his more than three decades as owner of the Los Angeles Clippers. But when audio surfaced April 25 of Sterling spewing racist remarks, he was banned for life by new NBA Commissioner Adam Silver just four days later and forced to sell the team.

LeBron goes home: This time, LeBron James decided to return home. Four



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP

Teenager Mikaela Shiffrin of the United States celebrates as she clinches the gold medal in the women's slalom at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia in February. Despite fears of terrorist attacks, the Games were not disrupted.

years after spurning Cleveland to sign with the Miami Heat, the Northeast Ohio native and four-time NBA MVP announced July 11 that he was rejoining the Cavaliers to try to end the city's half-century title drought.

4. Firsts for gay athletes: Jason Collins became the first openly gay man to play in the big four North American pro sports leagues when he made his debut with the Brooklyn Nets on Feb. 23. The veteran center had come out 10 months earlier, a trailblazing moment that helped inspire other athletes and sports officials

to follow his lead in 2014. That included Missouri All-American Michael Sam, who went on to be drafted into the NFL, though he has yet to play in a game.

5. Giants win World Series: Madison

Bumgarner pitched seven dominant innings to win Game 1 of the World Series. Then the San Francisco ace topped himself with a shutout in Game 5. He outdid himself yet again with five scoreless innings of relief in Game 7 to clinch the Giants' third championship in five years.



COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

6. College Football Playoff pays off: Ohio State lost to Virginia Tech on Sept. 6. Oregon was upset by Arizona on Oct. 2, and Alabama fell to Ole Miss two days later. The rest of those teams' regular-season games still mattered because of the new College Football Playoff, which made more and more matchups meaningful deep into the fall.



DEREK HAMILTON/AP

NASCAR Sprint Cup driver Tony Stewart struck and killed Kevin Ward Jr., 20, during a sprint car race in upstate New York this summer. Ward had climbed from his car and was on the track trying to confront Stewart at Canandaigua Motorsports Park. Stewart sat out three races, and a grand jury decided against criminal charges in Ward's death.

7. Tony Stewart: One of NASCAR's biggest stars, Tony Stewart, was taking part in a small sprint car race in upstate New York on Aug. 9 when he struck and killed 20-year-old driver Kevin Ward Jr. A grand jury decided not to bring criminal charges against Stewart, who skipped three NASCAR races as he grieved.

8. World Cup: Brazil's World Cup was a big celebration until those German goals started piling up. The expected massive protests didn't materialize, and the construction delays caused few headaches. The major disappointment came on the field when the hosts, without injured star Neymar, were thrashed 7-1 in the semifinals by eventual champion Germany.

9. Seahawks win Super Bowl: Richard Sherman's Seattle defense was way too much for Peyton Manning's Denver offense. The Seahawks flustered and flattened the Broncos with a 43-8 victory in the Super Bowl, when the weather cooperated outdoors in New Jersey.

10. Sochi Olympics: The Sochi Olympics opened amid fears of terrorist attacks and denunciations of Russia's so-called "gay propaganda" law. The Games went on peacefully, with the hosts winning 33 medals — though not in hockey. But by the closing ceremony, darkness lurked nearby in the world in violence in Ukraine.



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Seahawks team owner Paul Allen, left, holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy with Corey Foster, Jeremy Lane (20) and Russell Wilson (3).

SPORTS



Suspension repealed
Suh can play against Dallas, fined \$70K instead » **Page 25**

NFL domestic abuse top story

Also in the top 10:



No. 2: NBA bans Clippers owner Donald Sterling



No. 3: LeBron returns to Cleveland



No. 4: Benchmark year for gay athletes



No. 8: Germany takes World Cup in Brazil



League's handling of multiple incidents of player violence leads AP voting

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL's troubles with domestic violence were selected the sports story of the year Tuesday in an annual vote conducted by *The Associated Press*.

Ninety-four ballots were submitted from U.S. editors and news directors. Voters were asked to rank the top 10 sports stories of the year, with the first-place story receiving 10 points, the second-place story nine points and so on.

NFL domestic violence received 659 points and 29 first-place votes.

The No. 2 sports story, Clippers owner

Donald Sterling forced out by the NBA after his racist statements, had 518 points.

Here are 2014's top 10 stories:

1. NFL domestic violence: The video of the hit to the face, the pictures of the lash marks on a young boy's body, and all the rest of the unseemly evidence rolled out over days and weeks in a steady, stomach-churning stream.

With virtually every revelation about domestic abuse committed by Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson and other players, the NFL and its commissioner, Roger Goodell, made a new misstep that sent out a clear, repeating

message: They were in over their heads.

The \$9 billion industry that U.S. fans devour on a weekly basis ran into a public-relations crisis, the likes of which nobody could have predicted, and not even the league's supposedly well-oiled spin machine could repair. The real victims weren't the league or the players, whose punishment often felt arbitrary, but rather, the women and children these players were supposed to care for and protect.

As the season progressed and the scandal unfolded, the league and its teams took steps to try to remedy the problems

— public-service ads, an increased focus on education, and adopting a new, tougher policy, even though it was enacted without the blessing of the players union.

With the calendar about to flip, though, there are no guarantees the league has contained its crisis.

Rice, his skills declining, is eligible to play again after receiving a suspension that started at two games, was made indefinite when the video surfaced of him punching his then-fiancée in an elevator, then was scrubbed by a neutral arbitrator who ruled

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Mo'ne Davis, Bumgarner chosen female, male athletes of year » **Pages 28-29**

US-Russia shootout, Wimbledon final among memorable moments » **Page 30**

